



Lazy Dungeon Master



Volume 22 – The Marriage Interview

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Volume Twenty-Two - The Marriage Interview

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Chapter 244 - A Letter From the Sia Family

That day, a trouble was sent over to me by way of Village Sub-Chief Wozuma.

“Village Chief. Do you have a moment?”

“What, is it about that brothel again? Are you pretty backed up or something?”

“No, that’s not it. I’ve received a letter from the feudal lord of Sia...”

Seriously, why do you think I gave away so many of my authorities for. But well, Sia’s lord is a noble.

Since it’s such a big shot, it’s my duty as the Village Chief to handle it... even if I’m just a figurehead.

I took the lord’s letter from Wozuma. Let’s see, what’s it say?

[In this auspicious season of the mountain god’s remembrance, the white goddess dances to—]

“—This is a pretty long greeting. It’s annoying to read, do you have a summary?”

“Right here.”

I wanted to tell him that he should’ve just given me that first if he had it, but really, Wozuma is excellent. Even his manners are great... he’s not someone Haku-san sent over just for show.

By the way, the summary was three lines long.

- The Sia family has assessed me, an excellent adventurer, as being valuable, so they have prepared to support me.

- ‘Would you marry our daughter?’ While they would prefer me marrying into the Sia family, a standard marriage was also permissible.

- They want to meet me in person and get a verbal response. (Aka: Have to go)

“The Sia family wishes to have a consultation with you. Tying the knot with the village’s chief, so to speak. They are currently cooperating with the Adventurer Guild in this.”

Oh. It’s called Sia because it’s the Sia family’s territory. Right.

“Still though, being able to expand these three lines into all of this. Nobles truly are worth respecting.”

“They place important information within that decoration, use roundabout mannerisms to say to what extent they value you, and use those same mannerisms to ascertain whether or not you are a brutish person incapable of understanding their phrasing. There isn’t anything hidden within it this time, though.”

... Which leaves the other two parts. Well, I just leave it to Wozuma either way.

“Still, Village Chief, if I recall, you are D-Rank going by your adventurer rank, weren’t you? I don’t believe that could be said to be very good as an adventurer, does that mean they’ve gotten a whiff of your excellence from somewhere...?”

“... Hmm”

I can’t say it’d be strange if Wozuma, Haku-san’s pawn, knew about me having a B-Rank Adventurer Guild Card. Is that what he’s telling me?

“By the way, about the compulsory part on that third line... do I really have to go? I’d like to just end it with a letter.”

“They are landed nobles, after all. They aren’t people that an ordinary Village Chief can simply refuse. There isn’t much of a distance between Sia and here, either.”

“... But I—”

Whoops, I almost said [But I have Rokuko]. That was close. Wozuma is Haku-san’s pawn. Haku-san might just put on her war mask and lead a campaign to my house if I said something like that. Uhh...

“—... have a tiring job to do?”

“Please postpone your plans. A Village Chief’s number one duty is to comply with their lord. Here is your invitation.”

Yeah...

“Haaah, oh well. I guess I’ll just refuse...”

“Oh, you’re going to refuse?”

“Yeah. I mean, there’s no advantages in it for me.”

“You’d become a noble though? It may not be too large of a chance, but you could even become the lord of Sia.”

“C’mon, you know those aren’t merits as far as I’m concerned.”

“Well, I guess not. You don’t seem to be interested in status or honor, not even money...”

Me becoming a noble might cause business to improve, but I make more than enough even without that happening. The Dyne Company has been causing the gold coins I get from Debt Hero Wataru’s repayments and the rice payments I forcibly sell through Nayuta, too.

You need money to make money. I don’t know who said it, but it’s a famous saying.

“Right, our Golen village’s food lifeline is Sia. We import our flour from Sia, as well as basically all of our vegetables. We import some from Pavuera too though... but please, don’t offend the lord.”

“O-okay.”

I wound up getting a warning from Wozuma.

But that just means it’d be a good idea to have the dungeon give rice and vegetables as drops even if I fail, right? That would be a bit suspicious though. Alright, I’ll refuse them with all I have!

I guess I need to go talk with Rokuko about all this, seeing as we’ve finally decided that we’re partners (aka decision postponed).

I went to explain what was going on to Rokuko, who was lazing about in my room.

“And that’s why I’ll have to take a trip to Sia.”

“Bring Meat with you. You going alone would make me feel anxious.”

Huh? Didn’t she leave everything to me before though? Did my reliability fall or something?

“... Ah, umm, didn’t Leona do stuff to you? It’d be bad if there wasn’t anyone to stop you if you started going wild. Like that time.”

“Ooh...”

The day I can’t remember. The day that I supposedly made passes at every woman that caught my eye. From what I hear, I told Rei, the other monster

girls, Meat, Ichika... and even the guild Receptionist-san that I loved them. The one at fault was Leona. It was caused by Leona in the first place. Yeah, Leona's fault. Definitely her fault. It's a fact.

"Alright, I'll take her along."

"Make sure to get me a souvenir... Oh right, come here and I'll give you a farewell kiss!"

"Oi, where'd you learn that from?"

"From something called manga I bought with DP... Oh, right. I learned a bit of Japanese, so I can read it if it's simple enough!"

I-is she just haphazardly learning Japanese!?

Setting aside the fact she bought manga with DP, Japanese! Japanese, a language known for its learning difficulty!

"There was something called [Japanese] in the skill scroll area, it was 5,000 DP."

So it's from a skill? Rather, you can learn languages through skills? Fantasy, I should've known.

"Wait, let's back up. That farewell kiss. Uh, you don't really have to do it."

"Partners do that sort of thing! No buts. Come here and give me your cheek!"

"O-okay."

No buts?

I leaned down a bit towards Rokuko and showed her my right cheek.

"S-s-s-so then, Kehma. Farewell... n, nn—"

With that, Rokuko kissed me on my cheek. Crap, my face is hot. Her lips tickled my cheek. Is Rokuko still calm?

Taking a look at her, she was looking away, her face blushing top to bottom. Her lips were trembling slightly in embarrassment.

"C-come back in one piece, okay?"

"Yeah, I'm heading out."

... Yeah, I definitely have to turn down that marriage discussion.

Accompanied by Meat, I set off for Sia.

Chapter 245 - Visiting the Sia Family

We went to Sia in a cheap wagon that rocked and jolted constantly. Showing the invitation to the people at the gate, we were able to head through the gate especially quickly. The toll was free even including Meat, how nice. As expected of the lord's invitation.

Passing through the gate, we immediately went to the lord's mansion—or not. We first headed to the stalls. I came here to refuse them, so it's best not to expect any warm welcomes from here on. Quickly going and quickly coming back, I decided to intrude on them during that marvelous time in the early afternoon.

“Oh, it's that meat skewer stall. Smells great.”

“Yeah. Let's buy a lot.”

“Heya—ooh, long time no see, An-chan!”

Hmm? Who was he again... oh, right. He's that old guy we delivered the rabbit meat to way back.

“You're not selling rabbit meat today?”

“Yeah, I'm D-Rank already so I've graduated from rabbits. I'm not troubled by money anymore either.”

“Unfortunate, but congratulations on that. If you ever feel like bringing me any rabbits again, I'll buy them from you.”

“Thanks for the offer. Well, I'll buy five of them.”

“Coming right up. Ah, want to try a new flavor? I stocked up on some sauce from a peddler recently. I bought a few different kinds, but this one goes good with rabbit meat. It's delicious.”

“... Sure, I'll try it. Kuro, is that alright?”

“Yes.”

Is it our dungeon's sauce? Now that I think of it, we were giving out some in the dungeon to use in the inn as well I think? For it to spread over here... let's just say it's as expected.

When I paid him the twenty-five copper, he gave us six meat skewers, one of

them as a freebie.

“Oh, thanks.”

“Thanks for your help back then.”

Meat downed the whole skewer immediately... yep, her tail's wagging. Guess it tastes great.

I ate one too. It has sauce, so it's like yakitori.

“Goshujin-sama...”

“Ah, yeah. I'll have one more, you can eat the rest.”

Her tail flapped back and forth.

Meat immediately dug into the rest and nommed them up... there's sauce all around her mouth. So cute.

I pat her on the head.

“You two are the same as ever... why not release her from being a slave?”

“That's a line that I can't cross. Taking the one in a thousand chance into consideration...”

It's not like I don't trust her, but there's always the chance of her leaking information about the dungeon if she was tortured after being released from slavery. That'd be bad. And since it'd be bad, no can do.

I definitely don't think she'd attack me after being released or anything like that.

“It's complicated.”

“Hmm. Well, I won't poke into it... but take care of her, yeah?”

“Yeah.”

I bought ten more skewers and put them into my [Storage] to give to Rokuko and the rest as souvenirs.

Now that we've ate, I guess it's time to get going?

“It's time to head out... by the way, any clue where the lord lives?”

“... No idea.”

*

I headed back to the gate.

As expected, Sia's gatekeepers were civil servants and memorized the city's streets.

One of them even guided me there. It was probably due to the invitation.

... I recorded it on the map, so I can get here myself next time!

The lord's manor was a pretty big house even compared to the houses in this luxurious area in the northeast part of Sia. It was a three-floored, white European-styled building that felt like it was perfectly maintained even despite the spacious garden that could be seen from the gate.

Then, giving the invitation to the mansion's gatekeeper, I was brought into what looked like a reception area.

... The gatekeeper didn't say [This lowly adventurer is...!] or anything like that. He was thoroughly polite in his responses and was trained well.

The sofa was so soft that it made me think about the ones we use at our place. After sitting next to Meat for a while doing nothing, there was a knock at the door.

"Ah, come in."

Reflexively responding to it with a welcome, a solidly build gentleman that was wearing clean clothes came in.

"Did I keep you waiting? I'm Yudence Sia. I take it you know that I'm the lord?"

"I am Kehma. Pleased to meet you, Lord-sama. I wasn't waiting too long."

"That so?"

Introducing myself to him and shaking his hand, I sat back down.

"... Now that, if you don't mind, could you tell me a bit about it? About that village, I mean."

"That's fine, but, well... Concerning the matter of why I'm here..."

"I have heard some stories about Golen Village, but how many iron golems are there to secure?"

"How many, is it... it's not as though I have a detailed understanding of the matter either. We were able to capture around thirty last winter, though. But really, concerning the matter of why I'm here..."

"Hoh, thirty? That's a decent amount. That'd be enough to forge two hundred

complete sets of armor. Or maybe if we just forged swords, ten thousand of them? Of those thirty, how many did you capture, Kehma-dono?"

"It's not like I did it alone, but six of them..."

—Wait, is he probing around for how much I earn? ... Annual income is important, I guess.

"Umm. It's about the reason I'm here, but—"

"Ah, one moment please. Ooi, Mai, come on in!"

"Alright, sorry for intruding."

Saying that, a girl—she has blue hair!?

With the hair on the sides of her face in ringlets and wearing white and neat clothes, a just barely ten year old girl walked in.

... Yep. It's one of those.

"I am Maidence Sia. Are you Kehma-sama, the one who is my fiance?"

A N O T H E R L O L I.

The heck? Is the suspicion of me being a lolicon so concrete?

"... Err."

"Hey now, Mai. That's not it. He's not your fiance yet. Right, Kehma-dono?"

"Eh? Uh, yeah...—no, I don't intend to be her fiance at all."

"Hoh. So quick to jump to spouse-hood? How lively, Kehma-dono. Ha ha ha!"

"How hasty, Kehma-sama... fufu."

No, I just refused you. Why does it seem like they just took a step forward? Maidence hopped up onto the sofa next to Yudence with a quick heave-ho. Seeing that, Meat raised her hand.

"... May I?"

"... Is something wrong, Kuroinu-dono?"

"This matter, he refuses."

She said iiiiiiit!! Meat just blew apart their flow in just a few words!! Well done Meat, how reliable! I love it when you're like this!

"Sorry, I don't believe I heard you correctly. Could you say that again?"

"He. Refuses."

She totally just said it even shorter than last tiiiiime!! Her reliability makes me look timid... I was supposed to have more courage now, but compared to Meat, my courage is trash. Trash, I say!

When she said that again, the conversation's flow got so blown up that they were at a loss!

"... Kehma-dono? Is that your intention?"

He scowled at me, but it wasn't too scary. Compared to Haku-san's bloodlust-filled eyes, his is more like a spring breeze.

"Yeah, I don't intend to get married..."

"Great! Isn't that nice? How about we simply respect Kehma-dono's esteemed opinion on the matter?"

"Otou-sama, your view clearly seeped into your words... Kehma-sama, you're so dreamy!"

H-huh?

Was refusing them the correct answer from the start?

"Right! It'd be different if you were born a noble, but Kehma-sama, you came from a commoner. This is my first marriage interview, and for the person who offered to have such a childish body as mine... the result should be obvious."

Maidence kept nodding... is she on my side here?

"Which is why I decided to make you a fiance candidate and that it would be better for us to move forward with the engagement when I know your disposition better.

"Ooh, I see. How wise of you, Mai. Kehma-dono, is that alright?"

"Eh? No, I—"

"I'd definitely like to be friends with you, Kehma-sama. The stories of your adventures... I'd really, really, really love to hear about them!"

Maidence was leaning forward toward me with her whole body... Yudence was holding her back.

"Mai, isn't it around time for you to study?"

"Oh, excuse me, then. Kehma-sama, see you again."

Maidence hopped off the sofa and left the room. She bowed toward me and

smiled, waving on her way out the door.

How should I put it... it feels like my opinions have been mostly ignored since the moment I entered the room. Should I just run away?"

"... Now, Kehma-dono. I have something to talk with you about, so hear me out."

Yudence's face was smiling, but not his eyes. It definitely feels like it's about something troublesome.

Chapter 246 - The Sia Family's Request

“So in other words, you’re wanting that cute Ojou-san to have a fiance that can be cut off at any time to keep an evil bloodsucker away?”

“Exactly.”

Yudence nodded in satisfaction.

That’s how the story turned out.

Thanks to the recent discovery of a certain tunnel, Pavuera’s feudal lord grew interested in having his son marry Maidence. However, the rumors about his son weren’t too good. He wanted to refuse the offer, but he needed a reason to do so.

And so he decided that he would prefer getting her a fiance, allowing him to refuse the engagement.

So it’s not a fake marriage so much as it is a feigned betrothal.

“It wouldn’t have been too hard of a thing to refuse if she was already engaged, but now that he’s already started to show interest in her, I needed the man to have some prestige. On that point, Kehma-dono, as the one to discover that tunnel, as the one to first retrieve a magic sword from [Cave of Desires] after its transition phase, and as the one who has governed Golen Village in its development, you have quite a record.”

Hearing it like that and setting aside what actually happened, it really does sound like I’m excellent.

Moreover, I’m not a lolicon. In other words, I’m the most suitable marriage candidate.

“However, there is one matter that troubles me, this thing about you preferring young girls... is it true?”

“No, it isn’t.”

“But that Kuroinu-dono you bring with you, isn’t her name... Meat?”

“Kuro is a beloved member of my family. There are various matters concerning her name.”

Unexpectedly, I felt something soft beating against my waist. When I took a

look, it was Meat's tail wagging back and forth bumping against me. How cute.

"Alright. But I intend for my daughter to be clean until her marriage, do you understand?"

"Excuse me, but it sounds to me as though this is advanced with the assumption that I've agreed. Is that my imagination?"

"I wonder. With your excellence, you should know how to maneuver this to your advantage, right? I've, naturally, prepared a reward for you. How about it? You're an adventurer, so you could just think of this as a commission."

"I'm not exactly troubled in my finances, so I would still like to refuse. I have my own circumstances."

"Right, how about some information on a Godly Treasure? It would be about the Godly Pillow, a divine tool."

"... Nn? W-well, maybe I can hear you out?"

A lord's power for information gathering is frightening. Did he know it was something I want... Wait, come to think of it, didn't I tell the Adventurer Guild that I would buy any and all information about the Godly Beddings... maybe he learned about it from them?

But... it's information about a new piece of the set. Not another duplicate. I want it.

It was hard to refuse Yudence's coerciveness after behaving so modestly, but if it's about that, I'm prepared to let him keep the initiative for a bit longer.

"What, it's not too serious. Just let me use your name for around a month."

"A month?"

"Yeah. That's all I'll need to refuse him. So how about it? Just a month."

With that, Maid-san knocked at the door, came in, and whispered into Yudence's ear.

He nodded with a sigh.

"Kehma-dono. We've prepared a guest room for you to use, so please, stay the night. Having you return right back to Golen Village the same day after expressly calling you here myself would disgrace my name as the lord... Ah, I suppose you would arrive in the middle of the night if you left now?"

Oi. This is one of those [You can't refuse my hospitality, now can you?]

moments, isn't it? I could've sworn that I'd come at a time that would allow me to leave immediately... was I waiting for him longer than I thought I did? What should I do? Wozuma told me to not offend him... I guess I should just accept it... I want information on the beddings, anyways.

"I'll accept your hospitality, then."

"That's great. It's such a rare event, so please tell my daughter about some of your adventuring stories later. That girl loves to hear about things like that."

I guess I'm alright with accepting this feigned betrothal if it's only going to be for a month.

Biting onto the Godly Beddings bait dangling in front of me, that's what I felt.

*

"Goshujin-sama."

"Hmm?"

Arriving in the room prepared for me, Meat followed in behind me and whispered to me.

"... We're being watched."

"Hmm."

Meat secretly pointed to the wall. She did so in a way that wouldn't allow them to watch from the other side of the wall.

... We're being monitored? Well, it's almost definitely better for him to have more information on the person that would be his daughter's fiance, but it doesn't feel so good for me.

Let's play a prank.

I sat down on the soft sofa that was in the guest room. I sat in such a way that my back was to the wall.

"Meat, come here."

"...! Coming."

Guessing my intention, Meat sat in the same position as me.

She sat down using my front to lean back against, fitting snugly in front of me.

This was due to her being so used to this after being a hug pillow night after night.

“Nn... haah, Goshujin-sama.”

“Good girl, good girl.”

I stroked Meat on the head, mixing in some occasional skinship.

Each time, Meat’s voice would come out with a [Aah] or [Huuu].

... Huh? This is a bit different than I’d imagined. How should I put it... I was wanting to make the one monitoring us feel absurd for looking at someone petting their pet.

“No no no, it needs to look like a parent and child... Right, you and I are family. So it’s alright!”

“... Parent, child... Otou, san?”

Hoooh! My child is so cute. Let’s pet her some more.

... Is doing this what’s caused the suspicions about me being a lolicon to spread so much? Eh, whatever. My child is cute and cuteness is my child. Huh? She didn’t change into a Succubus, right?

“Nn~”

Meat starting rubbing her body against me. She really is like a dog. Good girl. We can’t even really talk about anything right now since we’re being watched. Just as I started to think that I’d just continue loving on Meat until someone called for me, I heard a knock at the door.

“Kehma-sama, it’s Maidence. Could I come in?”

“—Ah, one moment... alright, you can come in.”

Having Meat sit to my side, I invited Maidence in.

Opening the door slowly and gracefully, Maidence came in together with a maid. She looks serious. Maidence sat down on the sofa facing mine, but the maid remained standing to the side behind her.

“Now then, how can I help you, Maidence-sama. Oh, did you want to hear about my adventures?”

“Yes, I’d like to hear more about you, Kehma-sama... Umm, could you please call me Mai?”

“There’s no way I could, I’m just an average, humble adventurer, after all.”

Maidence spoke with her hand placed against her chest. Is that it? Is she one

of those people that prefers to be called more intimately?

“You’re my fiancé—I mean, you’re a candidate to be my fiancé, so we are connected like that. So...”

“... I’ll call you Mai-sama, then.”

“Could you not add on that ‘-sama’?”

“You add ‘-sama’ to my name as well, Mai-sama. Now we’re equal.”

Refuse once, then come to a compromise. Yep, that much should be alright. Now then, time to talk about my adventures—is what I thought, but... now that I think of it, I haven’t really done anything as an adventurer that could be called an adventure.

I’ve just done toilet cleaning, deliveries, rabbit hunting, and information on the dungeon. I can’t even tell anyone more than half of what I do.

“To be honest, I haven’t done much adventurer-like adventuring, less that I could talk about. I do know stories I’ve heard from other adventurers though, would you like to hear one of those?”

It appeared that my abridged story about Momotaro pleased Mai. [1]

Chapter 247 - The Sia Family's Dining Table

"And then, Momotaro, having tamed the dog, monkey, and pheasant, overthrew Ogre Village and took all of the stored treasures and magic stones it had."

"Hooh... that was the first time I've heard about Urashima's underwater dungeon too, but this one about Momotaro is more exciting."

Urashima's was a bad ending with him getting eaten by the treasure mimic in the end after all.

Momotaro's feels more like a battle scene. By the way, Meat was listening off to the side as well. I also got a bit into it and wound up starting to gesture as I spoke ever more magnificently.

After a while, I heard the sound of a bell ringing.

"Oh, it's time for dinner. Kehma-sama, let's go to the dining room."

"It's already that late?"

I didn't feel too hungry since I ate those meat skewers before I came here, but, well, I still feel a little hungry.

Why don't I treat my self to this Lord-sama's meal? I wonder what sort of things there'll be? I'll use it as reference for the inn.

I saw a long table when I entered the dining room. It looks like it could feed everyone all at the same time.

Yudence was already seated along with three others.

A young man, a mature woman, and an adolescent boy... his family, I take it.

"Oh, Kehma-dono, allow me to introduce everyone. Starting from the closest to me, you'll see my eldest son, Rondeau, my wife, Waltz, and my second son, Jitter."

"... Pleased to meet you all. I am Kehma, I serve as Golen Village's village chief."

I bowed... Yep, gotta keep on the face of a fiance candidate. It's time for the stress test.

A butler pulled out chairs for us when we went to sit. Maidence and Meat sat

obediently. I was a bit surprised, but I sat down as well.

And so the meal began.

*

The meal was more shabby than I thought it'd be. The bread was white, but the vegetable soup was just salty. There was also rabbit meat that had been carefully drained of blood. And the salad was, well, a salad.

The lord's meal was a lot more simple than I thought it'd be.

Just, is it that the ingredients were good, or the cooking? Or maybe both? It was a simple, yet powerful taste that made full use of the ingredients.

"It isn't as grand a meal as what gets served at your inn, right? Are you disappointed?"

"No, it's a good meal that had much care go into its preparation. The flavor of the ingredients is good."

"As far as I'm concerned, that's the best compliment you could give it. Today's ingredients were practically all produced in Sia, after all."

When I responded honestly, Yudence's smile deepened.

At that point, the eldest son, Rondeau, spoke to me.

"Kehma-dono, you don't look that muscular for an adventurer. Are you a mage?"

"Yeah. Well, more of a rear guard. I can use a sword well enough in case anything slips by."

"Oh? Is that so... I'd heard that you were rather brave, so I was wanting to have a bout with you."

"You had probably heard something about Kuro here, not me. She may look like this, but she's the strongest of party's front line."

"... She really doesn't look like it. If so, that's amazing."

Rondeau seemed to have an interest in one on one combat. I don't know how much daily DP he'd be worth, but he's probably trained himself a lot. He definitely does look to be confident in himself on that.

Once Rondeau's interest turned to Meat, the second son, Jitter, talked to me.

"Hey, Kehma-san. How do you hunt Iron Golems? Swords can't cut through them since they're made of iron, right?"

“You can aim at their exposed magic stones or attack them with magic... You can even just bash them with a hammer. Well, one of my C-Rank acquaintances uses a hammer.”

“Magic, huh... Kehma-san, what kind of magic can you use?”

“I can use a few kinds of magic to help from the rear. Any more than that is my secret as an adventurer. Exposing my hand recklessly would bring me closer to death, so forgive me on that.”

“Uuu, now I want to know...”

I take it that the second son is interested in magic? Feels like he has a chuuni atmosphere. No, magic is commonplace in this world, so I guess it's not really like that? Probably closer to how programmers are considered in Japan, then? In the brain power meaning, that is.

When I said that it would bring me closer to death, it made it so that Jitter wouldn't be able to ask me about it any further. Next was the lord's wife's, Waltz's, turn.

“Kehma-san, I hear that you are skilled in trade and village management? I would like to hear about how you've been developing that village.”

“No, not at all, I am a complete amateur. There are talented merchants gathered in the village, so I left all of the business to them. It's the same with the village's development, Iron Golems just happened to start appearing in the dungeon. None of that was due to me.”

“How modest of you.”

“It's the truth.”

Finished in dealing with the lord's wife, next was Maidence.

“Kehma-sama, you found lots of rare things in the dungeon, right?”

“Yeah, I was lucky.”

“What's the most unusual thing you've found?”

“Hmm... right, the most unusual thing I've found recently came from a treasure chest. They're Golems... I think?”

“From a treasure chest? Are they like a mimic?”

“They're more like submonsters. If you give them magical power, they follow you around like a pet. They're even pretty smart. I have them working at the inn nowadays.”

“Working Golems!? That’s amazing!”

Our conversation continued like that for a while until we finally finished eating... I wanted to hurry up and return to my room with Meat. Then, when we were drinking tea after the dinner.

“Oh right, I heard that Kehma-san received words of compliment from the White Goddess?”

Waltz spoke to me. Huh? Oh Miss Wife, could you run that by me again?

“The White Goddess?”

“Ahem! Right, I’m told that Kehma-dono’s inn has an onsen? The White Goddess seems to like it a lot.”

“Yeah, she does. It sounds like Kehma-dono has a wonderful inn.”

Yudence very artificially cleared his throat. Yeah, so that’s it? He wants to make a connection with Haku-san?

Now that I re-think it all, he was being very coercive against a mere village chief. I’d chalked it up to what a noble would do when facing a commoner, but... if that’s the reason, I get it now.

... He offered information on the Godly Pillow not for the betrothal, but for gaining a connection to Haku-san?

“More importantly, Kehma-dono, you talked to Mai, right? She’s a good child, isn’t she?”

“Yeah, she’s more than someone like me would deserve. Don’t you think that the engagement between her and someone like me would damage your reputation?”

“Oh? Being engaged with Kehma-sama wouldn’t be a bad thing at all. We want to know about Kehma-sama, too. Right, Otou-sama?”

“Right. It’s a good thing, even.”

Eh, is it better for this world’s nobles to have more engagements then? Or maybe it helps build up their resistance? Or maybe there’s like an engagement point card? Like ‘get 1 point when you break up’?

“So Kehma-dono, you don’t dislike Mai right? In that case, how about staying two or three more days to get to know each other some more?”

“I have work to do, so I need to return tomorrow.”

“In that case, could Mai go to Golen Village with you?”

Don't kid around. Wouldn't I have to come back, then?
I caved, reluctantly.

“... Alright, I'll stay for one day... but I'll have to issue some orders for work, they'll need be delivered quickly.”

“We'll send a messenger, you can even give us a letter to send.”

“I'll get to writing it now, then. Excuse me.”

“Mm.”

I took Meat, who was starting to doze off, and left my seat.
... Now then, what should I write?

Chapter 248 - An Outing With Maidence

I addressed the letter to Rokuko and wrote that I would be a little slow in returning, as well as that I might not be able to refuse them if things went bad, but also that I would try my best.

... The messenger guy was also told to say that I may, juuuust may be two or three days late.

I told him to get a response as well, so... yeah. Time to sleep.
I decided that I would sleep with Meat as my hug pillow.

... The guest room's bedding accommodation was a futon. One of the ones from our dungeon. For it to even be incorporated into the lord's residence...

*

The following day arrived. A letter from Rokuko arrived, let's see, what's it say?

[O ko.] [1]

Just two letters. It's in Japanese. Rokuko's getting a handle of her [Japanese] skill quick.

But still, the heck's [o ko] supposed to mean? [Oko (Mad)]? ... I get the feeling she said that she wouldn't be angry even if I took another wife, but is it [Oko (Mad)] after all?

No, wait, let me think about this. There's a chance that this [o ko] could be a shortened [o ko k], something that'd read as [OK OK], meaning [Understood, go for it]...

"She seemed to be pouting a lot for some reason."

"Ah, yeah..."

Even Rokuko's a girl. The kanji for 'a woman's heart' (女心) is inside the kanji for 'angry' (怒), and thinking about the fact that there's the character for 'again/still' (又) in it also, she could be angry that I'm making a move on another woman.

And she didn't say that she wouldn't be angry, just that she would pout...

“So what should I do today? Maybe I could sleep through it all. Let’s go back to sleep.”

With that, there was a knock at my door.
Yeah, I know. It’s breakfast time.

Arriving at the table after being lead there by Maid-san, only Maidence and Yudence were there. There was freshly baked bread, fried eggs, boar bacon, and salad for breakfast. It’s simple, but it really did feel like breakfast. The salad’s tomatoes were delicious.

“Now then, what do you plan on doing today, Mai?”
“I was thinking about visiting the orphanage with Kehma.”
“I see, it might be a good thing for Kehma-dono to personally understand the work that us nobles do. As for your escort... hmm, seeing as Kehma-dono will be going with you, perhaps you don’t need one?”

Looks like I just got nominated to do something troublesome. At the very least, I’d like to refrain from doing work for free. Even if I can’t get any money from it, I can’t let him make this a [Free of charge] thing. Therefore, I’ll blow the price up to get out of it.

“... It’ll only be for half a day, but I will undertake it if it’s a one day long escort commission for my party.”
“I don’t mind, I’ll even do it at the market price. I’ll do it as a designated commission.”

He went for it even though I said to pay me a day’s wages for half a day’s work. Maybe I should’ve asked for more... no, he’s a noble and a lord, so he should have the money...

“Let’s hurry up and go, Kehma-sama!”

Like that, Meat and I headed for the orphanage, dragged along by Maidence.

*

The orphanage was an annex on a church. From the looks of it, we’d be visiting the church first, followed by the orphanage afterwards.
Seeing as how the priest greeted us personally, it also looks like he’d been told in advance that Maidence would be coming.

Come to think of it, what religion is this church? It's not following that dungeon busting Light God's Decree, right?

Just as I started to think about that, Maidence explained it to me.

"This church worships the Raverio Empire's founding adventurer's god, the White Goddess. Come, let's pray."

It's obviously Haku-san. Yaaaay, give me your blessings~ (Not).

"So this White Goddess, she even has her own churches... is it alright for a real existing person to be a god?"

"? Gods are all existing people though? Are there any gods that don't exist?"

Aaah, right. In this world, gods are things that bring about miracles and divine blessings.

So then it's not a problem at all even if a living person became a god. So long as they could bring about the miracle stuff.

Well, there were even great people worshiped as gods and religion-founders treated like deities back on Earth, so I guess it's like that.

Listening to our conversation, the priest chimed in.

"... Could it be that you are not a follower of the White Goddess Faith?"

"I follow the Futon Religion. Our teachings follow the White Goddess Faith quite well, we worship the god that defends the night's tranquility."

"I've never heard of that religion, but... the night's tranquility? Does that mean it's a religious faction of the Dark God? If so, it truly must have an amiable relation with the White Goddess Faith."

"Yeah, well, it's something like that."

Let's go with what the priest says, he sounds informed.

I don't really know how they go about praying, so I used Maidence as a reference and went to my knees with my hands in front of my chest. Please let me unshackle myself from these troublesome things and head back home as soon as possible. Amen.

... She wouldn't give blessings at all. Ever. Of that, I am sure.

With our prayers complete, we headed for the orphanage.

When we entered the premises, I heard the noisy sounds of many children. Lot's of high-pitched 'yaaay's and 'wooo's. They should follow our Meat as an

example... ah, Meat might be a bit too hard for them.

“Ah, it’s Mai Ojou-sama!”

“It’s really her, Mai Ojou-sama! Ojou-sama~!”

A lot of kids around the same height as Meat and Maidence or perhaps a bit smaller came over with smiles all over their faces.

Beastkin, humans, elves, and even some that I think are dwarves... there’s a lot of races.

It’s a bit weird to say, but they look unexpectedly tidy. There’s magic like [Cleanup] in this world, so maybe it’s because of that?

“Who’s that Nii-chan...?”

“Ah, he is—”

“I am Mai-sama’s escort, an adventurer. Same with this small girl here.”

“She’s a guard? But she’s so tiny! How could she guard anything?”

Idiot. Meat’s even stronger than me. I didn’t say anything about it since her appearance manages to make her opponents drop their guard though.

“Even so, she’s a D-Rank adventurer. Well, it’s not like the public order here’s bad, so I’m enough to guard her.”

“Oooh~”

“And since we’re escorts, we have to stay by her side.”

“Kaay~”

Still though, I’m not good at handling children, are they making fun of me....? No, it’s not like their intelligence is... uuh.

Well, let’s set that aside. Maidence seems to be popular among the children. Even though she’s a noble, she remembers all of their names. I wonder if she comes here a lot?

“Kehma-sama, are you going to play too?”

“No, I’m fine. I’ll be taking it easy in the shade over there.”

“Hey, hey, Mai Ojooooou-sama! C’mon, let’s play mino!”

“Coming! Ah, I’m off then, Kehma-sama.”

Turning around in excitement, she ran off. It looks like they’re playing something similar to tag. From the looks of it, you lose if they touch your back with a stick. I’m guessing mino stands for minotaur, so it’s like losing from being

killed by its weapon...? Yep, definitely too troublesome for me.
Glancing next to me, it looked like Meat... didn't go to play with them.
Meat really is different from normal children...

"You sure you don't want to join in?"

"... If I did, that much would end instantly. Not fun."

I see, so their level is just too different?

However, a child that heard Meat's mutter challenged her.

"We'll also be adventurers in the future!"

"I won't lose so easily! I can even keep an adult busy for five minutes!"

"..."

Suddenly standing up, Meat grabbed the boy's hand.

"Wh-what are... uwaaaah!?"

"Yeah, done."

Meat threw the child against the ground softly and clapped his back.

"S-surprise attacks are dirty..."

"But would a real minotaur care?"

Meat caused the boy to grow silent... He probably hasn't even seen a real minotaur before. I wonder if he understands the difference between them now?

However, it turned into a disaster for Meat after that. Meat, having shown off a portion of her skill, was surrounded by a great number of children.

"Wooah!"

"So cool!"

"How'd you do that? Teach me!"

... Yeah, don't try and look at me with those eyes. Figure it out yourself.

Being able to interact with other kids her age will be a good experience for her.

Chapter 249 - An Outing With Maidence 2

Liberated in exchange for Meat, Maidence walked over. Spreading out her handkerchief next to me, who was resting in the shade, she sat down.

“Phew... really, those children don’t hold back.”
“Well, that’s what children do.”

Maidence’s voice was lively as she said that. I wonder if it’s because she enjoys playing with children the same age as her?

“Most of the children here are the children of adventurers.”
“Heeh...”

Meaning that is the reason they are orphans, probably. Maybe there are children of adventurers that died at our dungeon, too... now I feel a bit weird.

Having taken a short rest and caught her breath, Maidence turned toward me.

“... Um, this is the orphanage I’m supporting. Kehma-sama, what do you think of it? Do you think it’s just a publicity stunt?”
“Are you doing it with the intention for publicity?”
“No! I’d never do it for something like that. Just, there’s people who say I do.”
“Isn’t it alright then?”

Maidence looked to be somewhat relieved when I said that.

“At first I did it for the orphanage itself, but then, when I saw the children ask for more food with those smiles, I...”
“Kids not starving is a good thing.”
“Yeah... Excuse me, Kehma-sama. I want to continue supporting this place even when I am married.”
“Alright? What’s the problem?”
“Well... it’s a matter of money. I’m able to support it now thanks to my father’s help, but I would have to ask my husband when I’m married. I mean, Keh—”

“I get it. Relying on others for money is unstable. So why not earn it yourself? Rather, why not have the orphanage earn you money?”

Don't say Husband = Me, yeah?

Good, let's use this chance to nonchalantly show off how little money I have. I have to do it casually so that she won't dislike me so that I can still get information about the Godly Pillow from Yudence.

“Have the orphanage earn me money?”

“Yeah, then if you can't get any support, wouldn't you still be earning money on your own from the orphanage?”

“But when you mean earn money from the orphanage... do you mean... sell the orphans?”

How the heck did you get that idea? Well, I think I might know why, but still.

“I'm not saying that you have to go and make them slaves or anything. You just have to teach them a trade. With that, you won't even have to pay them... Have them set up a stall and sell small baubles they make. They could even cultivate some fields. So long as it makes them able to live on their own, anything would work.”

“Live on their own?”

“Wouldn't it be better if the orphans wouldn't starve even if you left them alone? It's not like they'll die even if it fails, they used to not have your support at all, yeah? Thinking about what they had to do for that to work is a bit troubling though... Right, there's a merchant in my village that'd definitely say something good like [Teach them all how to run a business!].”

Kukuku, she should be disillusioned by my [Whaaat, orphans? Leave 'em be]-esque attitude now.

“I see! So I should hire a merchant to teach them!”

“Eeh? Well, that works too.”

Eh? What just happened?

... If it's like that, I'll push with my greedy side!

“You can lend the initial funds and collect when there's a profit. If it goes well, you can add interest. If that happens, it'll be great. If it doesn't.... well, think about that if it happens.”

“Hmm, mmm. If they fail, I can just support them as normal. I can do also something on my side about the necessary trade permission, interesting.”

Getting the permission won't be much of a deal with the lord's daughter backing them. Being able to trade how you wanted so long as you used orphans, honestly, wouldn't merchants actually want to pay for the opportunity?

Eh? It'd be harder to fail that way? Hahaha, how stupid. Making money through trading isn't that easy, the reason my merchant paid the money back was because he's excellent.

But in the small chance they succeed too well, they'll need to be regulated.

“Mmm, the children just want to enjoy themselves, and if you're wanting to show that you're supporting them for the sake of supporting them, it might be better to just continue handing them money as-is.”

“...”

“Mai-sama, you should do what you want. It's none of my business.”

“... Right.”

Maidence started to brood over something.

... Did I succeed? Or fail?

What a hassle. Thinking about it won't help, so maybe I should go and help Meat out?

—Hey, brat! That's my hug pillow, don't get your snot all over it!

*

Having left the orphanage, we were walking down an uptown street. We weren't really travelling incognito, so we didn't hide. I just need to look impressive.

“Kehma-sama, could we visit that shop?”

“Hm? ... A grocer?”

Now that I take a look at it, isn't that the shop I bought an apple from a long time ago? It was sour.

“You want to buy something? An apple?”

“Yes. Shopkeep-san, do you have a moment?”

“Heya, welco—M-Maidence-sama! Welcome to my shop!”

As soon as he saw that it was Maidence, the shopkeeper fixed his posture and started speaking more politely. Seeing as her face is well known, maybe she takes strolls like these a lot?

“Could I have some of that fruit over there? Is this enough to buy it?”

“Thank you for your patronage!”

Maidence handed a silver coin over to the shopkeeper.

The shopkeeper moved away from the shop’s front into where he kept his inventory.

“Here it is! Here you go!”

With that, the shopkeeper walked out with a barrel of bananas... there’s a lot of them, so I guess she intends to distribute them? Wouldn’t it have been better to buy those before we went to the orphanage?

Rather, she doesn’t have any attendants here, so is she intending on having me carry them? When I casually looked to my left, Meat’s tail was wagging back and forth as if to say leave it to me.

However, Mai immediately stowed the barrel into an empty space she created with [Storage].

And then looked at me with pride and spoke.

“Fufufu, I can use [Storage]. I’ll have some at home, but this is more than I can eat so I’ll pass them out next time I go to the orphanage.”

“Hooh, amazing. [Storage] stops the passage of time too, so it’s great for storing perishables. It’s convenient for carrying them around, too.”

“... You don’t seem too surprised and you know so much about it. Have you seen [Storage] before?”

It’s because I use it so often. I didn’t say it though. It seems like a pretty expensive skill.

Uhh, let’s use the established setting to deceive her.

“I’ve seen White Goddess-sama use it.”

“... As expected of Kehma-sama.”

Shouldn't that be as expected of White Goddess-sama?

When I looked at Meat, her once vigorously wagging tail at the thought of carrying the barrel was now moving limply back and forth.

Did you want to carry the bananas that badly? Okay, I'll buy a bunch for you too since you're so lively.

Chapter 250 - Finishing the Outing

Previously: We bought bananas from a grocer.

Honestly, a few people have been following us for a while now. Are they Mai O'Doll's acquaintances...? There're two or three adult males who look a bit shady, like they feel like they're about to rob someone.

Hmm.

Maybe they're guards the lord sent out to guard her from behind the scenes. As evidence of that, they haven't made a move on us. A genuine thief would've already had a decent number of chances to cause a stir and swoop off with her. But sure, this works.

Mai O'Doll still looked like she wanted to go somewhere, but it's about time for us to head back to the mansion.

"Mai-sama, let's head back."

"Eeeh I wanted the date to last a bit longer... can't we?"

"No. You're being escorted... Please, look that way secretly. See the men that look like a thieves?"

"Eh!? I-is there? Aren't they from the Pavuera family?"

Oh, was that it? Nobles spying on each other?

... Von O'Doll making me into her guard was probably also to show off and get information. Let's hurry up and head back by devoting myself to my job as her guard. If I keep doing my work here indifferently, even they shouldn't misunderstand.

"Which is why we'll be ending our stroll here. Alright?"

"Aww... but Kehma-sama, if you just dealt with them..."

"My job here as your guard is to not expose you to dangerous matters... Do you want to be carried like a princess all the way back so that we could hurry?"

"Eh!? ... L-like a princess? U-umm, do you mean... that 'like a princess'?"

I don't know what she meant by 'that', but it looks like she understood what the carry is.

Mai O'Doll thought about something for a while, twisting and curling the ringlets in her blue hair. She then turns back to me and spoke with determination.

"Then, u-umm... please!"

"Sure, let's head off then... Kuro, carry the Ojou-sama."

"Okay."

"Eh—"

It's not like I ever said I would do it.

Mai O'Doll's face filled with confused puzzlement, Meat suddenly picked her up and started carrying her.

Now for the assist functionality of the clothes golem to shine.

*

Upon reaching the mansion, Meat let Mai O'Doll down.

We made those thief-looking people eat our dust. The victory goes to the clothes golem's boost... My hips hurt.

"Y-you're fast. I wasn't shook around at all. You're much stronger than you look."

"Ehen."

Meat was as expressionless as ever, but she still puffed her chest out in pride. Right, maybe she just expresses herself with her body instead of her face?

"... But I wanted you to do it for me, Kehma-sama. The princess carry."

"Unfortunately, I'm weak. I leave the physical labor to Kuro."

"Kehma-sama, please give me a princess carry next time."

"If there's another opportunity, I will."

"I'll be growing up fast from here on, though. It's an easy chance for you to do it now!"

"What, I said I'm weak, but I can at least carry a woman. It's alright even if I don't do it now."

"Uhuhuhu."

"Hahaha."

Mai O'Doll hid her mouth with her hand as she laughed. Even though she's so small, this loli is an aristocrat.

“Well then, how about we go report to Von O’Doll-sama?”

“You can princess carry me to Otou-sama’s room...”

“Outside of emergencies, I refrain from touching ladies in peaceful moments.”

“Muu, even though I wouldn’t mind...”

Mind it! Rather, I just want to go back home.

I went to Von O’Doll’s office, Meat and Mai O’Doll in tow.

Knocking on the door, I went in after getting permission. Von O’Doll was working on paperwork at his desk. Placing his fountain pen back in its holder, he smiled at us.

“Welcome back. That went fairly quickly, I thought you would have played for a bit longer?”

“Yeah, we had finish early due to a few suspicious fellows. Also, is it alright if I complete the guard escort commission with this?”

“Sure. What sort of fellows were they?”

I briefly explained the characteristics of the men I saw. Von O’Doll nodded, his expression unchanging for the most part. I guess it was the Von O’Doll sent them as guards route after all? It was a great excuse.

“... So, what about you? Have you decided to become Mai’s fiance?”

He said it like me becoming her fiance was a done deal.

But I refuse.

“On that, I shall refuse.”

Right next to me, Mai O’Doll seemed to deflate when I said that.

“Hmm... might I ask for your reason? You two only met yesterday, but I assume you would have learned at least a little about her in that time?”

“First off, nothing’s changed in the past half day. Secondly, honestly, I prefer my women bigger.”

“Hmm... that so?”

Ah, he hasn’t given up. He looks like he’s thinking about what hand to play next right now.

But you’ve activated my trap card! I’ll stop that train of thought in its tracks!

“Could I say something, Von O’Doll-sama? On this matter, I do have an idea.”

“Hmm? What?”

“Before that—”

I took a glance at Mai O’Doll. Von O’Doll seemed to have guessed my intention.

“Mai, please head back to your room.”

“... Awww. Kehma-sama, I, I won’t give up!”

Listening to Von O’Doll, Mai O’Doll exited the room after a little hesitation.

“Mai seems to like you quite a bit. Did something happen?”

“I didn’t intend to do anything that would cause it.”

“Well, I’ll have Mai tell me about it later. So, what was your suggestion?”

I smiled from ear to ear.

Eat it—my revenge!

“It’s just a proposal... but to be frank, she doesn’t exactly need to be engaged to a man, right?”

“...!? W-what do you mean?”

“Exactly what I said. I recommend that Kuro here be used for Mai-sama’s feigned engagement.”

Very straightforwardly, I presented Meat to him.

“I have several reasons... but mainly, she’s my party member, so she has the same achievements as me as an adventurer. Moreover, I can guarantee that she has a proven track record in the administration of Golen Village. All of my achievements are thanks to Kuro.”

And I guarantee that all of my achievements are actually entirely because of Meat! I will continue to insist this, I will not accept any objections!

Meat looked my way. She was surprised. Von O’Doll was surprised, too.

“So, is there any other prestige she’d need?”

“... Well, let’s say that her being a woman is alright. She’s even close to Mai in age... But isn’t she a slave? She has a collar on.”

“Kuro just likes wearing it. I am more or less supposed to be her master, but Kuro only wears that because she has a master fetish and can’t settle down

without wearing it. Von O'Doll-sama, you had a son, correct? In other words, even if I married Mai-sama, it isn't like I would become the lord... it's not like it matters either way, though. At any rate, it's just a feigned engagement, so it isn't as though the marriage would actually happen."

I prattled on and on with a sound argument, causing Von O'Doll to flinch somewhat.

"Y-yeah...? Could I consider it?"

"Then for your consideration, I shall add this."

Time for the final blow. I took out Meat's Adventurer Guild Card and showed it to him.

It was what we got from Haku-san... Ventulier, was it? I'm sure it had a noble rank like that. In other words, her B-Rank Guild Card was also proof of her nobility.

Chapter 251 - Fiance (Fake)

“This is...”

“Kuro’s Guild Card. By the way, as I’m D-Rank, she’s even better than me.”

I also showed him my D-Rank card.

“Mm? Kehma-dono, you aren’t B-Rank?”

“As you can see, I am D-Rank.”

“Hmm... is that real? You shouldn’t counterfeit those, Guild Card forgery is a serious felony you know?”

Von O’Doll said that as he looked at my Guild Card... eh?

What’s with his reaction?

Wouldn’t it be better for him to choose Meat as the fiance rather than me, a plebeian commoner? I showed him the card thinking he’d follow that route, but his reaction is like he knows that I also have a B-Rank card.

... Should I try feeling about?

“... Why do you think I’m B-Rank?”

“Your name is in the Raverio Empire’s aristocracy listing as a noble near Sia.”

What... the heck.

Seriously? There’s an aristocracy listing? No, there’d obviously be one, but I never thought that my rank could be found out by it.

... So him trying to force Mai O’Doll on me was exactly because he knew that I’m (kind of) a noble.

Rather, Haku-san, how far do your claws reach... no, maybe it wasn’t her? Was my name placed on the listing because I was registered as a B-Rank? That means it was an out the moment I got the B-Rank Guild Card.

“... Which means you knew that Kuro is a noble?”

“Well, yes. Her name is rather eye-catching.”

Yeah, seeing [Sex Slave (Meat)] in a high ranking list like that would be a bit surprising. As an aside, a man named that would hold the meaning of [Meat Shield (Meat)] from what I hear. [1]

“By the way, does that list include gender?”

“It does. It does, but... names are names. It might work if we went with saying that the listed gender is a mistake? Not even I thought that it would truly be a woman.”

Right? ... I wonder if I should change names since it's on there?

“By the way, the list gets renewed every five years. It only came out just recently.”

“Could you show me it?”

“Sure.”

A very large, thick, leather-covered and imposing book was brought out. We're listed among the newly added nobles? Nobles that have newly established houses... oh, Rokuko's there too. Her family name's Labriheart.

“There has never been an adventurer with the name of Meat becoming a noble before this. Virtually all of those named Meat are rankless slaves, and even those that register as adventurers would change their names. And even if they didn't, any sensible record keeper would stop them when they became a noble... there wasn't an inquiry?”

Haku-san isn't sensible... no, I guess it's more that she's merciless. As for me, I'm Kehma Golen.

It's a very Golen Village's Village Chief-like name. That'll give me away. did I not give Haku-san my family name?

But it not being my real name—Masuda-is convenient. I can insist that Golen that isn't me.

“Ah, so that's it. I was surprised when you suddenly said I was B-Rank, but that's not me. As you can see, I am a D-Rank adventurer, just Kehma.”

When I said that, Von O'Doll looked at me dubiously. However, I never said that I was a noble.

“... Did you just go crazy? Didn't you just admit to it a moment ago?”
“Huh? I was just checking out why you thought I was B-Rank. It's true that there's a noble family whose name matches that of my village, so I can't blame you for connecting them to me.”

“That so... so Kehma-dono, you insist that you are a D-Rank adventurer?”

“Yes, it is as is written on the Guild Card. This card is a real one, I don’t have the courage in me to do something like forgery.”

You could even use a lie detection magic tool, my Guild Card is the real thing. With that, Von O’Doll burst out laughing, unable to hold back.

“Kukuku, right. Sticking with it... You can hold your own even compared to nobles, Kehma-dono.”

“Thank you for the compliment.”

“Let’s go with your proposal and have Kuroinu-dono be the fiance.”

Oh? He said that he’d [Think] about it a moment ago, but he’s already decided?

Well, Meat’s definitely the better pick assuming I’m not a noble. She’s young, fit, and has an obedient personality. Other than her gender and slave status, there’s no shortcomings about her.

“Now then, my reward, please?”

“Mm, information about the [Godly Pillow] was it? Sure... The [Godly Pillow], a part of the [Godly Beddings], is an extremely important sacred object for our Raverio Empire. Everything I say after this will be between you and me.”

It’s amusing that beddings and sacred object overlap in meaning there... ah, but he probably wouldn’t know that huh? [2]

“Listen carefully as I’ll only say this once. The [Godly Pillow] exists and is something that each lord of the Sia family protects from generation to generation.”

...

Eh, so you mean it’s like that.

The [Godly Pillow] belongs to the Sia family?

“By the way, its management is not administered by the the feudal lord themselves. Neither the successor nor the successor candidate can touch the [Godly Pillow]. This includes their partners... do you understand?

The one managing it isn’t the feudal lord, Von O’Doll. Same with his eldest son, the successor, and his second son, the spare. Same goes with his spouse, which means...

“... Mai-sama... is the manager of the [Godly Pillow]...?”

“Mai’s fiance would fit the management criteria as well.”

... I see. So it’s basically him saying you need to become the formal fiance if you want to use the [Godly Pillow].

“In the name of the Sia family and White Goddess-sama, founder of the Raverio Empire, I swear that everything I said is true.”

“...!”

His oath was a guarantee of the Raverio Empire’s upper class nobility. It’s meaning was that [If this is a lie, I wouldn’t complain even if Haku-san destroyed the Sia family and its conspirators]. Come to think of it, Haku-san did tell me [They all swear on me] as small talk at some point. Also, it appears that this oath has never been broken by anyone before.

“I could put my oath into writing if you want? I couldn’t write about the contents of our chat though.”

“Of course, I understand.”

I had him write it down just in case.

*

By Meat becoming her fiance, it was decided that we would stay one more day.

Meat will once again be introduced to her family, this time as the fiance.

I wrote another letter and had it sent to Golen Village.

Its contents were simply: [I passed becoming the fiance over to Meat].

I returned to the same room as last night. I have some free time until dinner, so I decided to get some rest.

Just then, Meat tugged at my clothes, holding my shirt tightly.

“... Goshujin-sama?”

“Nn? What’s wrong?”

“ ... ”

Meat was trembling... what happened?

“... Oi, what’s wrong? Are you alright? Does your stomach hurt?”

“A-are you, getting rid, of me?”

Meat asked me in a strangled voice.

... Oh, so that’s how it sounded to her? That’s my bad.

“There’s no way I would part with my important hug pillow. We’ll just be lending your name for a while.”

“... Then I can keep... being Goshujin-sama’s slave, forever...?”

“You’ll be my hug pillow slave for as long as I live.”

She stopped trembling when I said that.

I know that it’s me saying it, but isn’t it a bad thing for me to treat her as a pillow slave her entire life?

Well, for now I decided to just take Meat as my hug pillow and have a nap.

“Kehma-sama! What happened!?”

... You could at least knock, Mai O’Doll.

Chapter 252 - Persuasion

Maidence entered the room just as I started to sleep with Meat as my hug pillow.

This setup's like a man just got caught cheating on his wife, huh. It's a bit awkward.

I decided to just sit up and hear her out.

"Kehma-sama! What happened!?"

"What happened about what?"

"About becoming my fiance! Why isn't it going to be you!?"

Oh, so it's about that. I thought that she was going to ask about me sleeping with Meat.

"Hmm, I'm sure that I declined from the outset though? Also, if I had to say, Kuro is a much better choice than me."

"Kehma-sama, you're better! If it's not you, I don't want to!"

Maidence said that as she shook both her head and body. Her blue ringlets swung about.

What vigor. Guess she doesn't want to have a girl as her fiance, moreover a slave girl... there's also the possibility that she wasn't told about it being a fake betrothal. It should be obvious that it's fake since Meat is a girl, though.

"I am honored, but sorry, I have someone that I like. I couldn't even think about being with another person." [1]

"Having several wives split between the legal wife and concubines is commonplace for nobles. THEREFORE! Kehma-sama, it's alright so long as you marry me and become a noble!"

"Oh? So that is to say that Lord-sama has concubines as well?"

"Yes, though they didn't come to yesterday's dinner."

Is that so~... So that means there's people other than Maidence who are qualified to manage the Godly Pillow?

Yudence, assuming you didn't lie, you never said that Maidence was the manager. You didn't break your vow... Well well. How many people are there

that have the qualifications?

“A-also, Kehma-sama, do you prefer dressing up as a woman? If so, although I can’t become a man, I can cross dress as one while you dress up as a woman!”

“... Oh. Kuro isn’t the person I was talking about. I was talking about a woman, she stayed back in Golen Village.”

I was trying to figure out what she was talking about for a moment there, but I figured it out after a second. She probably heard that [Meat is a man] from Yudence.

Rather, what’s with that double cross dressing? It is a situation that pops up here and there in manga and games, I guess.

“In that case, isn’t Kuro-cha—... Kuroinu-sama already similar to being your concubine, Kehma-sama? Wouldn’t it be no problem at all to include just one more person—me—as well?”

It looks like she’s confused about a number of things...

... Well, she is just a ten year old girl, so I guess her being so confused after quickly replacing her fiance-to-be like that is natural.

It’s like suddenly being told [You must like this person from now on] and having your fiance decided for you. Much less a child that doesn’t know too much, she’s at a sensitive age. Her age right now is basically when she’ll be the most confused.

But thanks to that, I got some valuable information. I wonder if Yudence would know this would happen?

Well, whatever. He’s the one that tripped up first.

“Well, your current fiance is this Meat Kuroinu right here.”

“I said, if it’s not Kehma-sama—... current?”

“... Whoops, that a slip of the tongue. What I said was confidential between Lord-sama and I.”

Maidence appeared to have picked up on the hidden meaning there. How excellent these aristocratic educations are.

Maidence settled down quickly.

“Well, umm. Kuroinu-sama is gentle, much stronger than appearances suggest, and umm, is excellent enough to be bestowed with the title of

ventulier at the age of ten, so I can't say that there's nothing better to wish for in a fiancée... other than the dressing up as a female part and the name. Ah, perhaps being a beastkin, too?"

"Those are trivial matters."

"... Trivial?"

"Yes, trivial. For appearances, using different clothes and using the name Kuroinu solves them. Concerning the point about being a beastkin, well, the racists can bark all they want."

With that, I felt a tug on my clothes. When I looked down, Meat was looking at me with puppy dog eyes.

"Uhh, what's wrong?"

"... I don't want to change my name."

"Y-yeah, you don't have to change it if you don't want~. Then just use the name when you're with outside people."

"Nn."

Meat nodded. Looks like I got her consent.

"... Is that name so important, Kuroinu-sama?"

"Nn, important."

"I-is that so? But Kuroinu-sama, no matter how I look at you, I can only see you as a girl."

"Yeah, well."

She is a girl after all. She's not just dressing up as one.

... I wonder if I can leave the rest to these two youngsters and get some sleep till dinner?

Even though that's what I wanted, it somehow turned into me telling her adventure stories again.

It went to the point that I even had to start fabricating adventure stories so I wanted to stop—but it wasn't just Maidence who looked so happy listening to them, but Meat too.

"Like that, it's said that Mr. Gold defeated, tamed, and mounted the brown bear while carrying his favorite axe over his shoulder."

"Umm, why was it a bear and not the horse?"

“I’ve never heard it told with him mounting the horse and it playing an active role in the end...” [2]

“... Rather, wouldn’t it have been better if the bear was his mount from the start?”

Well, I don’t too much about kintarou’s fable in detail, there’s even a possibility that that bear was actually a human. I don’t know, though.

“Ah, Kehma-sama. It’s about time for dinner.”

“Oh, should we get going then?”

“Yes, please be my escort.”

With that, Maidence held her hand out toward me.
I stood aside, placing Meat where I was.

“... Shall we go?”

“... Yeah...”

Hahaha, cheer up! That’s your fiance after all.

*

“—And that’s why, through Kehma-dono’s express recommendation, that Kuroinu-dono became Mai’s fiance.”

Yudence gave the announcement about the fiance matter before the meal began. He didn’t say that it was fake, though.

The lineup of people was the same as yesterday, but the lady of the house, supposedly hearing about it before this, didn’t miss a beat and kept her smile up the entire time. The eldest son, Waltz, looked somewhat bitter, while Gierb stood up and struck the table.

“Hold up, that one’s a slave! And a girl at that! There’s no reason for someone with such an idiotic name as Meat to be Mai’s fiance!”

“Gierb. Kuroinu is a man.”

“That’s even worse! I won’t acknowledge someone I can only see as a weak woman!”

I wonder who he decided to tell that this was a fake betrothal... well, at the very least, it doesn’t look like he told Gierb. Waltz looks a bit doubtful, but maybe he told him since he’s the next family head?

Haah, how troublesome. Really, Dungeon Masters should only have to think about dungeon stuff. Seriously.

“Oh? Gier Nii-sama, Kuroinu-sama is powerful. He was able to easily run all the way from the central district to here. Wouldn’t that be impossible for you?”

“E-even so, doesn’t he look weaker than me?”

“Haah... Kehma-dono, could you have Kuroinu-dono display some of his skill?”

“I don’t mind, but Kuro is hungry. Can it wait for after dinner?”

Meat kept having to wait despite the food right in front of her, staring at it the whole time.

Today’s meal was boar steak. Aaah, the fragrance of that roasted fat drifting up and the salt and pepper... it looks tasty with just a glance. Can Meat endure such a great sight?

Nope. Please wipe off your drool.

Oh, Meat, you know how to use a fork and knife, right? Eh, you’re fine with chopsticks?

“Ah, right. The food would get cold, shall we eat?”

“Let’s do the mock fight in the garden after we’re done. Perhaps you may be an opponent for me?”

And so we did the fight after the meat. It wasn’t just the second son, but even the eldest son that loved fighting.

The result? Yeah, Meat’s overwhelming victory.

Chapter 253 - Escapism

“You are amazing. If you want, why not break off your engagement with Mai and have me look after you?”

“I refuse, Raund-sama.”

“Hahaha, I got rejected. Ah, Kuroinu-sama was a [Man] huh. Hahaha, please get along well with Mai.”

“Haah...”

Oh, he knows about it? Guess the heir was told after all.

By the way, the mock fight was entirely in Meats favor as she spent the full thing avoiding Raund’s attacks, ending it by tapping her wooden knife on his neck.

If I had to place Raund’s strength in an adventurer ranking, I’d say he’s upper-mid C-Rank? He wasn’t a match against Meat, who’d practiced with the A-Rank Misha.

“B-but elder brother can use magic as well though!”

“Is that so?”

Meat glanced at me. Yeah, Meat’s also able to, but there’s no need to bother saying it.

I shook my head slightly. Meat responded with a small nod.

“... You’ve communicated something?”

“Oh, Mai-sama? Even though they’re your fiancée, they’re my party member. We’ve known enough for so long that there’s no way we couldn’t do something like that. Please don’t feel envious, yeah?”

“I was just thinking that I envied how long you’ve known each other.”

“Yeah, it’s been around a year.”

“... Eh, isn’t that short?”

... We’ve been together around 99% of the time since I’ve come to this world, so I’d never think of that as short. Meat’s memories from before she became my slave are all fuzzy, so she feels the same.

It’s only been a year, but it’s been a rich one.

“... I wonder if I should become an adventurer too, then?”

“Have fun with rabbit hunting. Please give it your all, I’ll be rooting for you.”

With me saying that, Maidence looked frustrated. Good, I chose the correct answer.

“Now then, you should have a good idea about their ability at this point. Any complains, Jitter-sama?”

“... I’d be putting elder brother down if I still did. I acknowledge him!”

Good, now there’s no more obstacles for the fake betrothal!

“Now that there’s no problem... can I head back?”

“Yeah, sorry about that. You can return, have a good rest.”

On the way back to my room, I informed a maid that I wouldn’t be needing breakfast in the morning.

*

And so I decided to secretly slip out in the middle of the night and return to the dungeon.

Stuuupid! The longer I stayed there the more troubles I’d have to deal with, so now that I’ve settled it all, staying in the lord’s manor would only be a bad move!

Just in case, I left behind a note stating: [As promised, I will lend Meat Kuroinu’s name for a one-month period. If you wish to borrow the person themselves, inform Golen Village as soon as you can that you wish to borrow them].

“Okay then, I’m tired but I can do it... maybe. Let’s go, Meat.”

“Yeah, Goshujin-sama.”

Seeing that the sun had gone down completely, I took Meat and left the mansion.

Uuu, so tired. But I have to endure!

It wasn’t perfectly dark outside due to the shops’ lights and the other various night time lighting such as street lights and the various taverns. Come to think of it, this is the first time I’ve walked around Sia after dark... I wonder if it’s darker in the side streets?

We reached the gate before long.

... It's closed, we were too late. Crap, we can't get out. Should we climb over the wall? No, there might be a magical defense function that stops that. We can't go about this haphazardly. What should we do...

"Oi, what are you doing here?"

Just as I was figuring out what to do, a guard suddenly spoke to me. Night patrol I guess? How eager you are with your duty.

"Oh, Guard-san. I was wanting to get out of the gate."

"The hours for passing through the gate are over. Come back tomorrow."

"... There's no way I can?"

"No way at all—is what I want to say, but I have an obligation to explain. If you have the lord's permission or are a noble yourself, you can pass after following some procedures."

It looks like this guard really is serious about his duty. Good guard.

... I thought about showing him my invitation from the lord, but it'd be troublesome if he went to the lord's mansion to verify its authenticity. I decided to use Meat's status as a noble. It'll stay on their records, but they'll come to Golen Village eventually after seeing I'm gone so it's not like anything will change.

"You were a noble? My apologies."

"No, thank you for your efforts this late."

Receiving the noble's (Meat's) words of gratitude, the guard saluted. The procedures were worked on in the meanwhile.

... It's a good thing that I can write simple things with the gloves golem.

Like that, we finished the procedures and went outside through a staff entrance.

Well, we also have the lord's permission to come back.

"Now then."

It was pitch black outside the gate... nooo idea where anything is. Should I have a golem bring me back automatically?

I used [Create Golem] to make a palanquin. The type of palanquin that'd belong

in the Edo period. Then I made two clay golems to carry it.

For some reason, golems are able to see in the dark rather well. They'll have an easy time heading back by following the map.

*

"So that's why you came back?"

"Yeah?"

"That's so coooooool, but it's like you gave them the cold shoulder, is that alright?"

"What, Rokuko, wasn't it already decided that I'd do that?"

Hearing Rokuko's reasonable question, I answered obediently.

"... I knew that!!"

Yeah, I can't keep up interacting with nobles at all. I'm wiped. Which is why I demand a break. Particularly right now, I just got back and I'm super tired, let me get to sleep please?

The ride back on that palanquin was unexpectedly rough, I couldn't rest on it at all.

"... I, umm, I got a bit mad, but I'm better now. You rushed back home, and even came to see me first."

Ah, she got mad after all.

"I'm going to go sleep for two or three days, so I'll leave it to you. Do your best at filling in for me."

"Don't just leave it to me. I'll absolutely be interrogating you, you know? I'll definitely wake you up when I come to do it!"

"... Alright. But at least let me sleep... and don't wake me up..."

There are times where you want to escape reality.

This moment right now was one of those times.

Chapter 254 - The Patrolling Village Chief:

Start

Well, by the time my head felt a bit better after sleeping till noon, the lord's messenger still hadn't arrived.

... Yeah, sure, let's go back to sleep.

... ..

Even after I went back to sleep and woke up again, there was still no news. Did I actually manage to get away from them? I doubt it for some reason.

"Eh? You're up? Morning, but it's only been a day, Kehma."

When I walked into the Village Chief's office, Rokuko was nomming on a melon bread at the desk. It wasn't one of those cheap Sweet-roll Assortments (5 DP for 6), but one of those super expensive bakery kinds. Our income's definitely high enough to cover it now though.

"Morning, Rokuko. Anything to report?"

"Nope. We've been on the lookout though."

No way, is there actually a chance that they didn't notice yet? Or maybe they did notice, and they're in the middle of preparations? In that case, I could sleep a bit more...

No, thinking about it like that's bad. I don't care, I just want to sleep anyways.

"... I was a bit concerned about it and didn't sleep too well. I ended up pushing it all on you, Rokuko."

"Kehma, you're actually caring about the details... well, I like that though."

"Hm? Did you say something?"

"I said that I like it when you're worried about pushing troublesome things over to me, Kehma."

"Oh? I like you too, Rokuko... oh, you're blushing? And a lot at that."

Rokuko was hiding her face with her hands.

"I-I can't help it! You said something like that, so..."

“Should I have not said it then?”

“Say it more! We’re partners, after all.”

“Okay, love you, Rokuko~”

It’d be perfect if I also planted a kiss on her right here, but I’m not playboy enough to just kiss her so easily.

Aah, my ears are burning up. I’m not used to stuff like this.

*

Well, I looked into my partner’s situation a bit after leaving the letter to her, so I guess I’ll give looking around our Golen Village a shot. I may be a figurehead, but I’m still the Village Chief.

I’ve been neglecting it all recently, so I want to check out how things are going.

“Oh? Goshujin-sama, goin’ on a stroll? Could I tag along?”

“Ichika? Sure, it’s more of a patrol than a stroll though.”

Ichika said she’s been working a part time job at some store on her days off from the inn, so she knew the current state of the village a lot better than me. She herself says: [I want money! To spin the slots!] She was given permission to work the job so long as it didn’t affect her performance at the inn.

And it appears that she had a day off from her part time job today as well.

“I see, so since I’m guidin’ ya, buy me some bakery curry buns.”

“That’s your goal?”

“Obviously. I’d do anythin’ to get some curry buns. Ah, wanna rub my boobs?”

“... You don’t sell yourself to other people like that, right?”

“Only to Goshujin-sama. I’m not cheap, and more than anythin’ I’m Goshujin-sama’s slave. I can’t say stuff like that on my own... or did you want me to do that? If you’re interested in that, then depending on the remuneration—”

“No, it’s alright. Sorry for asking you something strange.”

“Then two curry breads, ‘kay?”

“Yeah yeah, I’ll buy you two of them.”

Promising Ichika a reward, it was decided that she would take me around.

“So, wanna rub my boobs?”

“Let’s talk about something else.”

First off's right in front of the dungeon. [Cave of Desires] has a simple fence set up at its entrance.

Goblins and the like never really come out of it, but it seems to be something placed there just in the off chance anything does.

"There's been more kids here recently, so it's like tellin' em to not enter on their own or somethin'."

"Eh, more kids?"

"Merchants' children and adventurer families, stuff like that. There was a lot of people that came in the winter and started makin' new families, but those kids aren't born yet so they don't count."

It appeared that there was quite a number of people who wanted to migrate here because they could spend winters here leisurely in the hot springs. I heard that Village Sub-Chief Wozuma was keeping strange people out of the village, but even so there's been a lot of people migrating over.

Even Kusan, the carpenter adventurer, was busy doing adventurer stuff despite building housing.

"Hearing that, I'm starting to feel that I really am a figurehead."

"Really? They seem to go to you for your consent though."

"Yeah, I left all the decision-making stuff for immigration to Wozuma and Kusan."

"... Ooh, so that's it?"

With that, we arrived at our inn, [Dancing Doll's Pavilion], and the Adventurer Guild's branch office across the street from it.

The inn is attached to the Village Chief's residence and the employee dormitory, so it uses up quite a large area. There's a warehouse behind the branch office and a bar next to it. Village Sub-Chief Wozuma works as the barkeep there... well, Wozuma was working there from the start.

"Oh yeah, has the bar been doing well? There's a lot of stuff a sub-chief has to do."

"It's definitely thrivin'. Bars mainly get busy at night, so... see? There's construction goin' on behind the bar, it's expandin'."

Just as she said, it seems like they were building something. I could see a few of the adventurers that stay at our inn helping out the construction work. I wonder if he placed a commission for it at the branch office?

“Wait, it’s making that much money?”

“Even if it didn’t, he gets a lot of money as Village Sub-Chief. There hasn’t been any complaints.”

That so? Alrighty then.

After that was what was next to the bar, the Dyne Firm. Dyne, the merchant that manages our village’s finances. He’s a competent merchant that’s able to multiply funds after being handed them. Thanks to him, our village easily operates in surplus funds.

Ah, just in time. Dyne was stocking goods.

“Hoh? Ichika-yan. You don’t have work today, what’s goin’ on?”

“Just escortin’ my Goshujin-sama around on his patrol. We’re just window shoppin’, no need to fuss about us.”

“That so? Then take your time lookin’ around and... wait! Kehma-han, massive thanks for your patronage!”

“Y-yeah, you seem to be doing well, Dyne.”

Those two’s Pavueran accents get translated into a quasi-Kansai dialect, it seriously sounds like it. [1]

“Oh yeah, that magic tool called a [Stove] you got from the dungeon—it’s great!”

“A stove, huh?”

The stove is a magic tool that our Apprentice Witch Nerune developed. It’s use is exactly like a normal stove, it simply uses magic stones as fuel. A magic formation is drawn on a clay plate inside it, it’s even possible to adjust the caloric heat output.

I put it in some treasure chests inside the dungeon as well, but I also brought some directly to his shop. I just said I found it in the dungeon. (It wasn’t a lie either, as Nerune’s laboratory is inside the dungeon.)

“It’s light and can be used for most kinds of food as-is, they sell like hotcakes even to non-adventurers...! If ya find any more, definitely make sure to bring

'em to my shop."

"I will if I find any more. But for now, could I see what you have for sale?"

"Sure thing~!"

He lined up several weapons and magic tools meant for adventurers. Other than the weapons and magic tools he gets from our dungeon, it looks like some are from Kantra, the person who taught Nerune the basics of making magic tools. Kantra's a talented guy that's both a blacksmith and an alchemist. ... Oh, there were those swords that're both swords and magic tools too. Are they being sold? Ah, nope. Thought not~. [2]

".. Hmm? There seems to be some accessory-type things here too. This ring, is it a magic tool as well?"

"That's just a normal accessory. But they're in great demand!"

"Heeh, wonder why. Maybe people buy them after coming to sightsee?"

Our reputation's been spreading through word of mouth with people saying things like "I came for the hot spring" or "I came for the food". Is that why they want souvenirs too?

"No, I sell the wood sculptures to those customers."

The wooden sculptures are goods that the succubi in succubi village produce. We collect them and throw them into the treasure chests as fail prizes. Furthermore, they only make things shaped like matsutake mushrooms for some reason. He's been selling them by asserting they're limbless dolls or something. [3]

"... Eh, why?"

"They're items you get from a dungeon, wouldn't somethin' like that be interestin' for most people? They're strangely smooth even though they're made from wood, so they feels curiously good. Well, I sell them for a reasonable cost as amusing curios."

... I wonder if they have some lingering succubus scent on them? I picked up one of the dolls that had been lined up in a corner of the shop and gave it a whiff. I think I did smell something, but couldn't figure out what exactly it was.

Chapter 255 - The Patrolling Village Chief:

End

“Come to think of it, there’s only preserved foods here, where do people go to buy food?”

It’s not like everyone only ever eats at our inn or the bar, right? In that case, there should be people that cook food for themselves.

“There’s a new shop specializin’ in food that got built over that way.”

With that, Dyne pointed over to the district the villager’s houses were cluttered together.

Kantra’s smithy was in the same direction, but it was a little ways away from it.

... Has there been enough newcomers to open up a food-focused shop? Guess we’ll check out the housing area next. Bidding farewell to Dyne, I headed there with Ichika.

“Still though, there wouldn’t be too many places for me to actually see there, huh. It’s just a housing district.”

“On the contrary, Goshujin-sama, see this?”

Ichika pointed at the shacks in front of her.

“And this?”

She then pointed out the ordinary wooden houses. There weren’t many of them, but they were clustered together like there was a definite division. It caused it to look like there was a definite upgrade between them.

“Kusan and the other carpenters have gotten better, so they’re gettin’ good enough for some proper housin’.”

“... Umm, was there a river around here? What are they doing for water?”

“They use the water jug magic tool Kantra made. They work with magical power or magic stones, even the scrap magic stones you can get from goblins. For adventurers, goin’ into the dungeon’s like going to pump water.”

True, goblin magic stones are basically free in dungeons.

... But aren't goblin magic stones like tiny seeds inside their brains? What a gross way to draw water, oi.

"These are planned to be destroyed so new ones can be built."

"Hmm..."

Honestly, I'd like the ones that got built near the inn to be fixed up first... nah, they're good until they stop being good.

When we strolled a bit further into the residential district, there were people out hanging their laundry and some leaving with hoes in their hands... wait, hoes?

"Oh, look there Goshujin-sama. There's fields over that way! They've been growing vegetables."

"... Yeah. They've even cut a ways into the forest, haven't they."

When I looked over, the area had been developed more than I thought it was... I was somewhat concerned about the environmental destruction, but even with checking the map to confirm, they hadn't even used up one percent of it. The nature here's abundant—rather, beyond abundant.

... Well, even if the environment was destroyed, there's magic skills like [Grow Wood], so the trees could be regrown if it came down to it.

Magic sure is convenient.

"Oh, Ichika and Village Chief-san. Doing well~?"

"Village Chief just works at his desk all the time, you gotta move your body. Wanna help with the fields?"

"Here, take this. It's some vegetables I grew."

As we continued the stroll—err, the patrol, villagers with a local, country-like accent came up to us and handed me some vegetables... aren't you guys ordinarily adventurers? I remember you two by face.

"... Rather, how long have you been dryland farming?" [1]

"Since this past spring, maybe a month or two? The area around the dungeon's filled with magical power, so it shows a good result for harvesting."

"It's the best for us farmers. Well, we'd ruin the soil if we did it too much!"

"It'll be fine if we keep usin' fertilizer. Goblin corpses are a dime a dozen anyway."

Seriously? It's one of those settings where magical power causes vegetables to grow quickly? And then with goblin corpses as fertilizer? What bloody vegetables. Be it water or fertilizer, goblins take an active role.

Also, you guys were definitely ordinary adventurers, since when did you pick up that accent and since when did you turn into farmers?

"Well, I was the fifth son in a family of farmers, so... I've been yearnin' to have a field of my own."

"I've been trying to mimic Pa's accent, but it really feels like I'm a farmer when I use the accent doesn't it?"

"Eh, you guys had the accent originally? It just looked like fake personas to me though."

Can't say I get it, but at least the two of them were enjoying the 'villager life'.

After that, I headed to Kantra's smithy, still holding the fresh vegetables.

"Compared to vegetables grown with [Grow Weed], it's like night and day."

"Yah they're pretty tasty. Like actual vegetables... ah, it's Kantra."

Kantra was banging some metal into shape... is he making a single-handled pot?

Noticing me, he stopped and waved with his hammer.

"Ah, Kehma-dono. You're back? I heard you'd be married into the Sia family or something?"

"You were misinformed, but more importantly, is that a pot? Not a magic tool, right?"

"Yeah. I got an order for a normal pot. They wanted a small one they could use on one of those portable stoves."

I also had one of those periods where I thought blacksmiths only ever made weapons and armor.

Well, even excluding the obvious things like cutlery, they make nails and pots and the like.

"Right, Kehma-dono! Please take a look at this, it's something new I made!"

"Oh? What is it, uhh, a spear?"

"Yeah, fire comes out from the base of the blade when you press the switch on the grip, heating the blade up. It's hot!"

Kantra was using alchemy with the goal of making a magic sword of his own. By the way, he said it releases fire, but it's at most as hot as a lighter, maybe a stove burner.

"I see, so it ups its offensive strength a little."

"Though as a downside, it takes some time to warm up and becomes brittle if it's cooled down suddenly, breaking easily."

"Isn't that a pretty big weakness? Is it not possible to make it so that it heats up fast enough after turning the fire on after the start of the battle?"

"Maybe if it was kept on the entire time... aah, that'd use so many magic stones though."

By the way, the reason he made it a spear instead of a sword is because it would get so hot that you wouldn't be able to hold it.

It's chock full of faults, huh.

"Well, it can be improved. Why not let the fire come directly out from the blade?"

"Hmm, hmm... that definitely would look cool. But then balancing the intensity would be hard. If I used orichalcum... hah, that'd be a legendary weapon. Maybe black steel would... Kehma-dono, have you seen any black steel golems appearing further within the dungeon?"

"Not as of yet."

I am considering using a golem with orichalcum joints as a dungeon boss though. I've been using mostly iron golems recently, but maybe I should up the metal type for the golem spawners here soon...

Black steel golem spawners are 1,000,000 DP... woooooow. I wonder if I could afford it if I used all my current wealth?

"That so? Well, let me know if you see any. It'd be cheaper than if I had to import it."

"Yeah, will do."

Thinking that it was about time I check somewhere else out, I bade Kantra farewell.

"Still though, Kantra-han's doin' some awesomely cool stuff. But Goshujin-sama, ya just make magic swords with [Create Golem], so..."

We left the smithy. Let's see, what other facilities does the village have...

"I guess the inn's next? We don't really need to though, it's our base anyway~"

"Well, we'll check it out anyway, followed by the dungeon."

Making my rounds patrolling the village now that it had become splendidly large, I headed back to the inn.

Chapter 256 - Extra: Soap Bubbles

Soap bubbles, Rokuko, and Meat.

On that day, Rokuko, having purchased something interesting from a peddler, was looking for someone to show it off to. And she'd found Meat training in the backyard.

"Hey, Meat, come here for a sec and check this out."

"What is it, Rokuko-sama?"

Suddenly, Rokuko took out a long and slender bottle. She thought that it was something to drink, but it didn't appear to be so.

"It's something strange I bought from a peddler, he said he purchased it from Spanner's Store or something. It's a toy you play with, soap bubbles!" [1]

"Soap bubbles...?"

"Yeah, so let's play!"

Rokuko put the tip of the cap into the liquid inside the small bottle and, taking it out, blew into the liquid that had adhered to the item. Upon doing so, a large bubble formed on its other side, shaking and undulating as it expanded—
—until it popped.

"Wow! The bubble was suuuper big right!?"

"Yeah, its coloring was beautiful."

"But it's pretty hard. There's a trick to making it big like that. Meat, here, you give it a try."

Saying that, Rokuko passed the small bottle over to Meat. Meat imitated how Rokuko dipped the part of the cap into the bottle, pulled it back out and blew on it. With that, tiny soap bubbles formed and blew away.

"Ahahaha, you blew way too hard! You have to blow more gently to make the really big ones!"

"Mmuu, it's hard. But aren't the small ones beautiful too?"

“Yeah, they’re just always beautiful.”

The soap bubbles drifted about in the air. Meat tried poking them.
... But they dodged her.

“Muuu.”

She tried poking two or three more times, but she couldn’t touch them for some reason.

It was like they had wills of their own or something.

She started to get worked up about it and pulled out her blade golem on reflex. Slicing at one after setting it as her mark, she cut it cleanly in two, its two halves rolling up simultaneously as it popped.
Meat let out her breath, contented.

“... There.”

“Hohoh.”

Seeing that, Rokuko held up the small tube and blew tiny bubbles over to Meat.

“!”

Ping, ping. Meat chased after the soap bubbles, slicing each of them. Chasing them out of instinct, she cut through them.

“Ooh, you can do it, Meat! Look, there’s some behind you too!”
“Teeeyah!”

Meat kept chasing them, popping them all left and right. Virtually all of the bubbles popped, Meat let out another satisfied breath.
... But Rokuko took the chance to blow more bubbles.

“...!”

“Take this! Can you win against my Bubble Army!?”

Meat’s tail wagged back and forth.
This had become something that wasn’t mere playing. Again, playing with soap bubbles had become something other than playing.

Rokuko continued blowing the bubbles until the liquid ran out, with Meat continuing the pop each and every one in opposition.

... As a result, Rokuko's mouth was soaked with the soapy liquid, but that's a story for another time.

Chapter 257 - Patrolling the Inn

Our inn, [Dancing Dolls Pavilion]. The base I built at the dungeon's surface layer.

It's an inn I made myself through the use of [Create Golem]. So that I could move it through the menu's [Deployment], I made it a subdivision of a floor.

Recently I've been living in the Village Chief's residence, which I annexed on to it.

[Welco—... ah, Master.]

"Ah, Neru, you're on duty?"

A doll I picked up in the dungeon that had awareness... using that as the pretext, it was actually a golem I made to look like a humanoid figurine that the insubstantial ring succubus Neru is possessing. She was sitting at the reception counter.

I'd originally established that clay golems were helping us, so her existence here was fully accepted with a simple "Well, it is [Dancing Dolls Pavilion] we're talking about!"

... Please continue being our inn's patrons!

"Well, there's so many golems here anyway... People probably don't care too much about seeing a single extra doll."

[Yeah, it's to the point that people want to shake my hands.]

"Neru, did you turn into a tourist attraction...?"

I headed past the reception desk and into where the dining hall and guest rooms were. There wasn't much to say about the guest rooms. They were just fifty copper a night, no meals. They had a futon and a light magic tool in it.

And as for the dining hall... well, it was a dining hall. It used a food ticket system to serve guests their food. The food itself used to be stuff we bought with DP, but nowadays we have Kinue-san cooking practically all of it.

The midday rush is over so it's mostly empty now. Today's waitresses are—right, the two part-timers, Setsuna and Nayuta.

I knew that the two of them were dungeon-related individuals, but they didn't

know that we had anything to do with the dungeon at all (with the exception of Nerune's coming out about it). Let's have a conversation with them.

"Ah, Village Chief. Hungry?"

"Hmm? Yeah, a bit."

"Goshujin-sama, Goshujin-sama, me too~"

Ichika popped up and begged like a starved racehorse when I responded to Setsuna. Alright already, you can back off, I'll order you some too... rather, aren't our employees supposed to be given meals?

With that, we ate some simple sandwiches.

By the way, Kinue-san learned the unique skill called [Cooking], a great skill for a silky—that is, for a house fairy that loves house chores.

... Oooh! Kinue-san, you got even better. Aren't you more skilled than the Sia lord's cook at this point?

Now that I've filled my belly, let's take a look at the rest of our inn's facilities—the onsen and the game room, I guess?

The onsen should be alright... other than the massage chair golem I have there, it's pretty much just a standard onsen. There's no culture for bathing in the nude here though, so wearing a bath towel's become the default—ah, but I think there was talk about occasionally entering nude? It's fine either way, honestly.

"By the way, Goshujin-sama. Do we have pocket money to spend for uhh... testin' the game room?"

"Obviously not."

Sorry Ichika, but no.

We entered the game room.

The game room now has two tables to enjoy yourself on with things like poker and dice, as well as two varieties of rat races. The slots are all over at the bar now, just being able to earn money from them through the rental fee alone is good.

"Ooookay! Time's almost up to place your bets... oh, Master."

"Rei? You had a shift here today?"

"Yes. Ah, will you place a bet?"

When I took a glance to check out the runners—the rats—our eyes met.

... Translation Function ACTIVATE!

Allow me to explain. This translation function I acquired upon coming to this other world allows me to understand even a rat if I activate it consciously!

[Hooray! Master's here! Now I can win!]

[Hey now, who said you're gonna win? Only one of us can, Deppa.]

[But isn't it better for the one Master puts down on to win? Definitely would make him happy.]

[No, hold it. Shouldn't we go as always? I mean—]

[Nn? In that case, Faito is next up to win, yeah?]

[Wait up. Wouldn't it be bad for the one Master bets on if they lose? Have to reject that.]

[Faito, did you happen to forget that you were meant to be first?]

[N-no way, definitely not... I am wise!]

Yep, the rats seem well today. Let's not place a bet.

"I'm thinking about playing some dice today."

[[[[[Eeh—]]]] ... ho—]

Whoops, Translation Function cancel—there we go.

I then tried moving over to the suitable table... ah, looks like there's a guy on a winning streak here. He looks well dressed, probably not someone from this village... alright, time to take away his stuff.

"Mind if I join?"

"Nn? Sure, I accept anyone's money!"

How motivated you are. Sorry, but those dice are my golems.

*

Phew, this guy was crazy lucky. He never rolled below a three. Maybe he has the [Luck] skill?

"No way... I... lost? What cheat did you use!?"

"Come on, there's no need to accuse me like that."

"Shut up! There's no way I lost, you absolutely cheated! I'm not going to pay a copper!"

Woah, an annoying person.

“Ah, you’re not a resident here are you? ... Did you know this, then? In this village, cheating is allowed so long as you don’t get caught. Those who shirk their debts are treated the same as thieves. In other words, if you say that you won’t pay, it’s fine to treat you as a slave and take your possessions. You can check with the Village Chief on it if you want.”

When I said that, one of the villager-adventurers closed the entrance. Nice one. I’ll give you a pudding later.

“Haah? You think I’d f*ckin let you make me a slave? Don’t make me laugh, I’m a B-Rank adventurer—a noble!”

“Yeah, I don’t care. Are you going to pay up or not—are you a thief?”

“I’m not a thief! Rather, I’ll have you executed for going against the crown! I’ll forgive you right now if you give me your woman, how’s that sound?”

Ahh, so he’s bluffing.

Rather, isn’t it even worse for a B-Rank to be a thief like that? Honestly, only the ridiculous S-Rank heroes can do as they please, and even those get purged by Haku-san if they’re too outrageous.

The Adventurer Guild is strict with its members that commit crimes.

While on the subject, it’s a heavy crime to impersonate as a noble.

And above all, starting a fight against me or anything that’s mine is an auto out.

“Right, so you’re saying that you don’t intend to pay?”

“Obviously, you f*cking cheat!”

The self-proclaimed B-Rank adventurer pulled out his sword and stabbed it into the table.

Oh, I’m going to have you pay me that back too.

“... Yeah. I’ll give a pudding to whoever deals with this guy.”

“Hyahaah! I was waiting for that!”

“The pudding’s mine! Practically been bouncin’ outa my shoes waitin’ here!”

“I’ll have this shit give me back some of the money I lost!”

“Wha—hey—wai—-!”

Hearing my order, adventurers popped up and attacked him all at once, capturing him in just a few seconds.

Ah, you third guy... you'll be a thief if you actually do that. Even if he cheated, it's valid if you can't figure out why.

By the way, Ichika participated even though his capture was already guaranteed. Guess she wanted some pudding, too?

Chapter 258 - The Patrolling Dungeon Master

Handing over the imitation B-Rank adventurer (D-Rank) to the adventurer guild, I treated everyone to pudding.

Incidentally, I had a decent amount of spending money on me, so that amount was basically just within the margin of error looking at the income we have nowadays.

Also, the dice that guy used only ever came up with fours, fives and sixes. It looked like he'd been secretly switching in his dice when I checked them out.

Done with looking into the inn, the last thing to do is the dungeon. First, [Great Tsuia Mountain Tunnel]. It's actually only a part of [Cave of Desires], but as far as the adventurer guild's management is concerned, they are separate dungeons.

It has a mechanism that opens the gate upon the toll being paid, the toll itself being based simply on total weight. Because of that, the main trade goods going back and forth were Pavuera's spices and Sia's wheat as they were relatively light goods and sold at a decent price.

The rooms that had the tollgates were arranged side by side in the center of the cave. If someone couldn't pay the toll, they'd either have to turn back, abandon some of their cargo, or try and sell it to other merchants right then and there.

I've moved the tollgates around and even increased the number of them, but no one seemed to think much of it since there weren't any monsters. It's convenient, but is it alright for them to be like that...?

... Maybe the merchants all think they'd be kept from being able to use the cave if they make too much of a fuss?

"Well then, Ichika, that's enough. I know what's happening from here on."

"Nn? 'Kay, reward?"

Ichika smiled and left after I handed her curry bread as her reward.

From here on is the main dungeon, [Cave of Desires]. I headed back to the village chief's room.

... To be blunt, I was tired of walking. Using the menu should be good enough yeah? It is a dungeon after all.

The first thing after passing the dungeon's entrance was the stone entrance floor.

It had many traps, such as blades popping out of a door or how some of the flagstones on the ground turning into pitfalls. The traps further in were deadly if not handled carefully, but the ones near the entrance were just to the level of causing someone to twist their ankle.

And Goblins being the enemy was a feature.

They're suitable for making a floor that beginners can train on. You could even say that it's thanks to this floor that this dungeon is seen as relatively peaceful. They're filled with cheap things, but there are a good number of treasure chests that spawn, so it's even a good way for beginners to earn some pocket money.

Next up, the labyrinth floor. Taking up both the second and third floors assuming one took the correct route, this was the main money maker for those in our dungeon!

The reason for that was that iron golems spawned here.

The body of an iron golem is made out of solid iron. In other words, it was a giant iron bar. It could sell for a considerably good price.

The iron golems could spawn practically infinitely through the monster spawner, so even though it looks like a dungeon, there's a good reason it's called a dungeon mine.

I also make various things using their iron. As for killing my associates, well, golems are materials. They're different.

Something like that.

Moving on, the golems that mimic walls and move around change the labyrinth's route slightly.

... Come to think of it, the magic sword test room is there too, huh. It being a proper test room is finally starting to become common knowledge.

What appeared immediately after making it through the labyrinth was a facility that had been named the [Avarice Lodge]. It was set of DP exploitation

rooms, they could be passed by without needing to stop at.

The DP I can get from adventurers increases if they are confined. Therefore, the [Avarice Lodge] was several small rooms where those staying in them could acquire items and gold for locking themselves up in the room for twelve or twenty-four hours.

In truth though, we're just putting a suitable amount of money or items in from behind the scenes. We'll give out a magic sword blade golem sometimes as a special prize, so it's a very stupid... very profitable facility.

After passing by the [Avarice Lodge] and descending the trap-infested open ceiling spiral staircase was the warehouse area.

It's the place I protect with the various golems I make through my experiments with [Create Golem] like the four-armed golem or the pincushion golem, but it's basically an easy area that you can get a magic sword blade golem from. Having both orderly pathways and rooms, it really was a warehouse.

Adventurers had started to make it there recently.

After that, the path divided into four. One led to the arena, followed by a boss room. Another led to our neighbor dungeon, [Flame Cavern]. The third one led to the riddle area, followed by an area I'm still working on. The final one led to Succubus Village.

My handmade haniwa golems lay in wait in the arena. They had various gimmicks and were pretty strong. It would take at least a C-Rank adventurer to do anything against them.

The boss room had an iron haniwa made of solid iron just waiting to greet intruders in it.

After that was the core room. It's just a dummy core, though. By insisting that this was the final floor to the outside world, it should cause our dungeon to be recognized as a good, shallow dungeon.

Our apprentice witch, Nerune, had her lab stationed as a hidden room within the core room's ceiling. She researches magic tools day and night there—when she isn't working her part time job, that is.

... I think she's looking into an [Engine Magic Tool] right now? She's developing a magic tool that rotates and uses pistons. The pistons move through the expansion of air caused by thermal energy, so it should be able to be a clean

energy if we use magic tools for that.

Eh? You say that an engine golem would be good enough?
Well sure, but there's meaning in having things that people other than me can make. Honestly, an engine magic tool might even perform better.
... Rather, there isn't really much else to research right now.

As for the cave that led to [Flame Cavern], well, it's basically Feni's house. Having an entire floor loaned out as a kennel feels luxurious as heck. It's been swimming through the magma like an archerfish more recently, increasing its offensive strength somewhat. There's nothing really else to talk about. Our relations with [Flame Cavern] are good.

And uhh, I made a variety of variety show attractions for the place that's still under development. It looks like a playground for people into crossfit. Well, the interior's still under development, so what else would you expect?

Finally comes Succubus Village, a village protected by succubi. Right now I just have them making limbless dolls as a side job, but they'll squeeze any adventurers that wander in dry and strip them down to their underwear before rolling them outside the dungeon. Man or woman, they'll have fun with anyone. I told them to not go so far that someone dies though. Furthermore, I've made preparations to give reinforcements if adventurers resist them. Looking at how I set it up, it's practically the same thing as a bottakuri bar. [1]

Suira acts as the village chief for Succubus Village... they want to have proper jobs and not just a side job, but I can't think of anything for them to do right now. Sorry.

When I checked them out through the monitor, I saw the loli succubus, Michiru, carving a small doll for her side job. Holding onto the limbless doll with such a serious face, fixing it little by little as she rubs her face against it and licks it... Yep. Looks like she's particular about its feel. Maybe that's why they're so popular~

I closed the monitor. Looking about—done.
... Time to sleep!

Chapter 259 - The Marriage Interview

Discussion (Yudence's PoV): Start

I am Yudence Sia, the lord of Sia.

On that day, I was looking over the latest version of the peerage listings. I stumbled across the name of Golen Village, a village that cropped up just last year but was developing remarkably quickly.

“Kehma Golen...? Hmm? If I recall, Kehma was the name of that village’s leader... he was a noble?”

That question lingering in my mind, I immediately put in an inquiry. Information on aristocrats can be obtained by contacting the administration bureau in the imperial capital. For ventuliers, there we also be information regarding their party members and past achievements as adventurers. B-Rank adventurers will have made a name for themselves and have some distinguishments in their history.

A few days after I made an inquiry through magic mailing, the information was sent to me.

According to the information I received, Kehma Golen had three other party members also at B-Rank and had completed five dungeons with his party.

[White Trial] [Cave of Desires] [White Beach] [Bone Cave] [Cave of the Three-Way Struggle]...

... I’d never heard of some of those dungeons, but he completed them all with a single party. It even says that he finished three of them after obtaining the peerage. He even went so far as to destroy two of them.

He completed two dungeons that he was just barely permitted to enter due to their danger. In other words, he has shown himself to be a considerably powerful individual. Moreover—

—[White Goddess guarantees this individual’s wit.]

Of all things, it had that comment added on.

... That’s bad. When I saw that sentence, I unintentionally wound up dropping

my cup of tea, breaking it. An influential person made a village this close to Sia and was developing it? And having the White Goddess, someone who everyone knows of in the Raverio Empire, backing him...

No matter how I think about it, that's bad. I can't leave this alone.

Gah, my stomach's starting to hurt. I might lose some hair over this...

By the way, according to that same bit of information, there was also an inquiry sent to Sia from the imperial capital.

Are you fine with the [Godly Pillow] that is being managed in Sia being moved to Golen Village? That was a rather nonchalant question...

I am not such a fool as to misunderstand the meaning behind such a frank question... It was telling me that I should use the [Godly Pillow] as a trump card for securing my friendship with them.

What to do... Should I try marrying my daughter to Kehma Golen?

There's a chance that he's a different person I suppose, but I suppose I should take precaution as an insurance policy.

It may be because he himself has attempted to hide his peerage, but Golen Village's chief is stated to be Kehma, a commoner.

And as the village's chief, Kehma is very good at what he does.

Reason Given: 'The excellent Village Chief is the village's best adventurer.'

Reason Given: 'He is a sincere man who lends aid to others.'

Reason Given: 'An extraordinarily wise and capable man.'

Seeing Golen Village's remarkable development recently, the credibility of his reputation is high.

The fact that he was able to develop a place that was empty just last year enough to easily make it through winter—no, even develop through winter is a frightening accomplishment. He's been able to fully utilize the dungeon mine's capabilities and is on the right track for its management... While he is certainly lucky, doing that would be impossible without enough talent to match it.

Even if he wasn't backed by White Goddess, just his talent alone would make bringing him into the family not a loss.

Well, there is a rumor about him preferring young girls, but aristocrats are sometimes like that.

At any rate, let's invite him over for a chance to see him face to face.

*

Having come to my estate, Kehma-dono was a polite man with black hair and dark eyes.

He had also brought along a beautifully dressed dog beastkin slave... She should be one of his party members, Meat Kuroinu, if I recall.

It was an awful name. Assuming I'm not wrong, this girl should be the origin of the news saying that he prefers them young. That said, I'm not sure whether it's because of this girl that he's considered as such or that he brings her around because he is like that.

"Did I keep you waiting? I'm Yudence Sia. I take it you know that I'm the lord?"

"I am Kehma. Pleased to meet you, Lord-sama. I wasn't waiting too long."

"That so?"

He didn't appear to be angry at all despite me having him wait in the room for enough time for the bell to toll.

... Is he a man that doesn't care about time or is he going to stick with the pretense of him being a commoner? At the very least, the rumors about him that say he's tolerant appear to be true.

I noticed right away that Kehma-dono was uninterested in marrying my daughter, Maidence.

To Kehma-dono, someone who is preferred White Goddess-sama, the position of being a family's head might not hold any significance.

Either way, I kept trying to forcibly tie him to us. I inquired about the village's plan and Kehma-dono's own story. I'd already looked into that information in advance though, of course.

According to what Kehma-dono's said, they had captured around as much as thirty iron golems, but just from the information we've collected here, they'd exported forty golems' worth of ingots. If I assume there's some we didn't catch, there should be at least fifty worth, if not more.

Normal village chiefs would generally exaggerate their reports... yet Kehma-dono merely said it wasn't a big deal.

In other words, it meant that something like that wasn't much compared to the rest of his exploits.

As we were conversing with each other, Mai came along and began talking with Kehma-dono as a fiance candidate.

My sagacious daughter understood that Kehma-dono was an amazing person from that short talk.

I also want to tie her together with Kehma-dono. At the very least, I don't want them to be hostile with one another.

But just then, Kuroinu-dono spoke up.

"This matter, he refuses."

"... Kehma-dono? Is that your intention?"

My daughter was dissatisfied by the abrupt and grand refusal, so I tried scowling at him after infusing magical power into my eyes.

As the lord and as the father whose betrothal invitation was just denied, it should just barely be seen as not hostile.

"Yeah, I don't intend to get married..."

But Kehma-dono didn't even bat an eye. A weak human would have fainted, even a well-trained merchant would have broken into a cold sweat... what terrific willpower.

As expected of someone that the White Goddess has guaranteed. Ah, I might be seen as hostile if things keep going like this, let's turn the flow of the conversation back around.

"Great! Isn't that nice? How about we simply respect Kehma-dono's esteemed opinion on the matter?"

"Otou-sama, your view clearly seeped into your words... Kehma-sama, you're so dreamy!"

After that, Mai's cleverness made it so that Kehma-dono would be her fiance candidate. After she left, I spoke under the pretext that we would simply be borrowing his name to use as her fiance.

I said that an impertinent youth from Pavuera was wanting to marry Mai, saying that the want was spurred by the tunnel that now connected our towns... and

that we refused.

There's rumors about him being a child prodigy, but I didn't want Mai to leave Sia. That said, Golen Village is rather close, so that's fine.

... I know that it's my own selfishness, but really, my daughter is so cute.

When I hinted at Kehma-dono possibly gaining the [Godly Pillow] as a reward, he showed enough interest in it that it surprised me.

The timing felt right, so I figured it just might work if I pushed a little.

By the way, the room I lent to Kehma-dono is able to let me see what's happening... but according to what my spies tell me, Kuroinu-dono refers to Kehma-dono as 'Otou-san' and that Kehma-dono treats their relationship as one between a parent and child.

Kehma-dono himself referred to her as an important member of his family, and now that I think about it, they do both have black hair. In other words, they may both be descendants of a hero.

It wouldn't be odd if the two truly were connected by blood.

There's even a high probability that the two are parent and child.

Kehma-dono said that he's single, so he might have had a relationship in the past that he doesn't want coming to light.

His daughter's name is Meat, something that basically acted as a slave collar for her... it's probably something he doesn't want to talk about at all.

How should I put it? Despite their circumstances, I wound up saying things that did a great disservice to Kehma-dono and Kuroinu-dono.

There were rumors about them often sleeping together in the same room, but it would be natural to sleep with your daughter.

I would like to sleep with Mai if I could. Maybe that wish would come true if I were a commoner? It's impossible for me to abandon my position as the lord, though.

... I'd like to hear more details about his circumstances, but probing any further would just be hostile toward them.

I told the spies to tell me if anything else happened and went back to my normal routine.

But Kehma-dono's age is a bit young for a daughter that big, just what age did he have her at?

Kuroinu-dono would have had a dog beastkin as a mother, but I don't recall hearing anything about dog beastkin having an accelerated growth period? Does that mean Kehma-dono is older than he looks, then? He may not only draw on the blood of a hero, but maybe of elves, too? ... Could he be White Goddess-sama's...? No, he couldn't be. Right...?

*

We entertained Kehma-dono with a dinner.

After introducing my family, our head chef—I say chef, but he merely just learned by following a single person's example—did his best to prepare the meal.

Our head chef is the best chef, lauded throughout the Sia territory... is what I thought, but it's said Kehma-dono's inn serves new and rare dishes.

For such a brilliant chef to work at a lodge in a remote area like that... mmm, just that much makes it feel profound.

I can't know which of the two chefs are better without comparing theirs with ours, but there's a possibility that chef might have the same skill Cooking God Ishidaka had, [Cooking]—doubtful, though.

Kehma-dono talked about this and that during the dinner, the mood was good.

But it felt like Kehma-dono had his mind on something.

“Kehma-dono, you're still capable despite being a rear guard right? How about we have mock fight after dinner?”

“Hahaha, surely you're jesting, Rondeau-sama. You wouldn't have fun with someone as unskilled as me.”

... Rondeau, you are the eldest son. You need to put more effort into your official duties than standing in the front line.

By the way, I'd told everyone here about how Kehma-dono's wit was guaranteed by the White Goddess, as well about his distinguishments in his dungeon captures. Due to that, the engagement discussion for Mai and Kehma-dono was taken well.

My wife looked at me as I drank some tea after the dinner and smiled.

Ah, I was making the face I make when I'm thinking about bad things. She gets me.

"Oh right, I heard that Kehma-san received words of compliment from the White Goddess?"

"... The White Goddess?"

Despite his expression having been generally unmoved this entire time, even during my coercion from before, Kehma cocked his right eyebrow at that.

"Ahem! Right, I'm told that Kehma-dono's inn has an onsen? The White Goddess seems to like it a lot."

"Yeah, she does. It sounds like Kehma-dono has a wonderful inn."

Waltz, you did that on purpose, didn't you?

One way or another, we're still uncertain as to whether this Kehma-dono from Golen Village was the same Kehma Golen found on the peerage listings. She was probably wanting to make certain.

What a lovely wife. But please, let me know you're going to do something like that in advance.

Well, Waltz probably also already thought that Kehma-dono and Kehma Golen were the same person. Something like 98% certainty becoming 99% certainty...

He reacted with something similar to 'you knew about that?' as a pretext. Usually, people would have been thrilled to show off White Goddess-sama's affection, it wasn't something to be hidden.

Nevertheless, him sticking to hiding it probably means he has some circumstances going on.

Circumstances that make him hide his peerage.

Sublime circumstances that make him have to hide his relation to his daughter...!

"More importantly, Kehma-dono, you talked to Mai, right? She's a good child, isn't she?"

"Yeah, she's more than someone like me would deserve. Don't you think that the engagement between her and someone like me would damage your reputation?"

“Oh? Being engaged with Kehma-sama wouldn’t be a bad thing at all. We want to know about Kehma-sama, too. Right, Otou-sama?”

Even if the engagement got annulled, getting engaged to someone talented enough to earn the White Goddess’ attention wouldn’t marr her reputation. Well, it’s not as though it wouldn’t do anything, but it definitely wouldn’t harm it much.

“Right. It’s a good thing, even.”

Setting aside my wants as the lord, I’d prefer to take my time in marrying off my adorable Mai, but that’ll just be my little secret.

Chapter 260 - The Marriage Interview

Discussion (Yudence's PoV): End

I had Kehma-dono act as Mai's guard for the morning of the following day. And they did return—but it looks like he found out about the spies I sent to trail them? Once again, it looks like he truly is a skilled adventurer.

Kehma-dono once again refused being her fiancé. Hmm, does he have a woman already? Perhaps Kuroinu-dono's mother?

I can't do anything about that, but maybe there's still another way we could tie ourselves together—

—just as I was beginning to think that, unexpectedly, Kehma-dono tested out the idea of Kuroinu-dono being Mai's fiancé.

What a great opportunity!

I trembled from such good news.

Moreover, it appears that Kehma-dono's achievements are also considered Kuroinu-dono's.

... I want to accept it. I seriously want to accept it right away, but I have to endure it and keep up my appearance here. I'll see if he has some other motive first, I can accept it later.

As I thought that, Kehma-dono took out Kuroinu-dono's Guild Card.

... It looks like he wants me to decide right away, showing me Kuroinu-dono's own peerage like that. Should I allow myself to compromise and accept it so quickly? I wouldn't be able to probe for more information first, though.

With that, Kehma-dono also showed me his Guild Card. It listed him as D-Rank.

When I asked him about it, it appeared as though he'd never heard of the peerage listings.

And he continued to insist that he was an ordinary D-Rank adventurer.

... In other words, him receiving White Goddess-sama's favor is for no reason other than because of being a key person with special circumstances to him.

Furthermore, although it's not well known to commoners, the Raverio Empire does indeed allow same-sex marriage. The law book has a single sentence on the matter: [In the case of same-sex marriages, even sisters may marry].

Therefore, same-sex marriage is allowed even within the same family to reinforce intrafamilial bonds. While heretical, it's even possible to continue a bloodline through [Futanaru], a potion made by the Chaos God that throws one's sex into chaos. [1]

Such expensive potions are rather rare amongst the lower class aristocracy, but it should be acquirable with my family's power.

Or perhaps Kehma-dono's plan is to change Kuroinu-dono's sex...? For him to do something like registering her name as [Meat] on the aristocratic record, there must be some impossibly complex circumstances surrounding him.

If Mai were registered on the record as [Meat] and I was unable to have her name changed... even I might think about at least changing her sex. That is what we call parental love.

Kukuku, I get it, I get it, Kehma-dono! Our daughters are just too cute!

"Let's go with your proposal and have Kuroinu-dono be the fiance."

After that, I gave Kehma-dono information on the [Godly Pillow] as a reward for borrowing his name as a fiance.

I couldn't give him all of the information about it, so I told him all I could with full sincerity.

"... Mai-sama... is the manager of the [Godly Pillow]...?"

"Mai's fiance would fit the management criteria as well."

I couldn't say exactly who the manager of it was, but anyone should be able to figure it out with that.

I'm not sure what sort of circumstance is making him want the [Godly Pillow] so badly, but as a fellow father of cute daughters, I want to get along with Kehma-dono.

After Kehma-dono returned to his room, Mai entered the room.

"I should marry Kehma-sama, Otou-sama!"

"What's this, now?"

"If I want to truly save the orphans, I need to hire merchants, educate the kids,

and give them work. Just feeding them is no different than admiring pets!”
“H-huh? I think I get the gist of what you’re saying, but could you explain it to me just in case?”

It sounds like Mai was overwhelmed by Kehma-dono’s wisdom.
Kehma-dono had given her a plan on how to help the orphanage by giving them an education, hiring them on as workers and helping them become independent.
But she said that he also said something about how it not being necessary if she was just doing it for the publicity.

Mai seems to have taken it as sarcasm, but I don’t believe that what Kehma-dono said was sarcasm, but simply something resulting from abiding to political measures.

People feel relieved when they can see that there are some more unfortunate than themselves. Although there’s also a slum outside the south gate, having an orphanage within the town would certainly fall in line that that intention.

But I’d rather not teach her about filthy things like that. I’d prefer for the people to trust in the beautiful existence that is Mai.
Well, there shouldn’t be too much of an impact even if the orphanage is improved, so maybe I should let Mai do what she wants for the experience?

“That’s a wonderful idea, it would certainly help the economy, too. You could implement it by recycling your current budget, would you like to give it a shot?”
“Yes, absolutely!”

Mai’s eyes sparkled in motivation.

“And that’s why I absolutely definitely really really have to marry Kehma-sama. Kuro-chaaa.... Kuroinu-sama carried me in her arms, so...? K-Kehma-sama has to take responsibility as her master.”

“Oh, about that... Kuroinu-dono will be taking his place as your fiance.”
“... Eh?”

Mai inclined her head to the side.

“During my conversation with Kehma-dono a moment ago, we decided that Kuroinu-dono will be your fiance.”
“... I-isn’t she a girl though!?”

Oh, I haven't taught Mai about the same-sex marriage thing yet, have I? Maybe I postponed her education a bit too much.

"It was Kehma-dono's recommendation. Also, you shouldn't treat Kuroinu-dono as a woman."

"Eh, K-Kuro-chan is a cross dresser!?"

"Huh? ... W-well, yeah, something like that."

Kehma-dono did speak as though to insist she were male, so I understand that it's probably better to treat her as such.

"... I'll go talk to Kehma-sama! I won't agree to this without hearing about it directly from him!"

Saying that, Mai ran out of the room. She's still a child, isn't she... I think that Kehma-dono should be able to persuade her, but let's hope that this doesn't cause him to get angry and break this off. It should be fine though, I've already given him his reward.

Later on, Kuroinu-dono escorted her to dinner. It must have gone well. That said, my second son, Jitter, raised his voice.

"Hold up, that one's a slave! And a girl at that! There's no reason for someone with such an idiotic name as Meat to be Mai's fiance!"

Crap, Jitter hasn't been taught about same-sax marriage either? Rondeau seemed to understand it, though. Waltz just smiled wryly. There's no other choice than to have Kuroinu-dono show her skill, forcing him to consent.

I thought that Jitter would be able to win against Kuroinu-dono... but even as someone strong enough to toy around with Rondeau, I couldn't see through her at all with my eyes.

*

The following day, having told the maid that he wouldn't be having breakfast, Kehma-dono didn't come for breakfast. It was only during my work after the meal that we discovered what had occurred.

“Lord-sama. Last night, a soldier contacted me saying that a ventulier passed through the gate.”

“Hmm... wait, was it Kuroinu-dono!?”

We receive reports from the gate when aristocrats come and go through it. We would receive notifications right away for aristocrats passing through the gate outside of normal hours, but it's not like that for when an ventulier does so.

After all, they often need to use the gate at night for adventurer purposes.

“Crap...”

Kehma-dono's room was vacant with just a single note placed atop the beddings they'd used.

The note had on it as follows:

[It's hard to sleep under surveillance, so I'll be returning to my village. You may freely use the name of Meat Kuroinu for one month. If she herself absolutely has to, contact me at Golen Village.]

Geh! ... So he realized he was being watched from the start... as expected, he's an amazing man.

Still though, to head back without saying anything—wait, I think I heard him say something like that last night? In a sense, him using his authority as a ventulier could be his way of telling us he's off.

At any rate, I'm allowed to use Kuroinu-dono's name as Mai's fiance for a month, signed in writing.

... In other words, what he was really saying...

[If you can complete the preparations within a month, I'll allow my daughter to marry yours] ...!

Phew... what wonderful love for his daughter! I can already imagine drinking alcohol next to Kehma-dono as we watch the two of them marry.

“... I'll have to get the [Futanaru].”

But this'll probably cause a dispute over where the two live.

... Would the normal thing to do be suggesting each of them to live away from us parents?

Hmm, well, that'll be up to Mai and Kuroinu-dono to decide.

Chapter 261 - Extra: A Certain Typical Dungeon

A story about when Kehma was busy doing this and that during the Dungeon Battle.

A certain Dungeon Core—Core No. 629 was leisurely managing his dungeon that was set to be a grassland.

He was a rabbit-type Dungeon Core. As an orange rabbit, the first floor of his dungeon was the surrounding grassland itself.

“Haah, nyo adventurers nyow either~. So myuch spare time~”

Core No. 629 was hopping about with three other rabbits.

These rabbits were dungeon monsters, more or less. Unlike ordinary rabbits, they each had a single horn growing from their foreheads: horned rabbits... Other than their horns, they were no different from normal rabbits.

“I caught a grasshopper~. Looky looky~”

“Omnomnom nom nom.... grass is tasty~”

“Ow~!? Who bit my nyeeaaar!?”

The rabbits were happy-go-lucky and were messing around. The sight of them doing so was very pleasant.

As for how they communicated, Core No. 629 being a rabbit-type core was sufficient for them to understand each other. However, there were times where the rabbits did not listen to what they were told due to their lacking intelligence.

“Nyuuu guys~. Make sure nyuu look around~! Want some kyarrots?”

“Come on~, 629-syama isn’t myotivated either though~”

“The weather’s so nyice~, the grass is so goooooood.”

“I wanna rub my floofy tail though~”

Core No. 629 sighed, not knowing what to do about his whimsical rabbits. It was peaceful.

It was nice spending everyday sunbathing outside, but doing that wouldn’t earn

him DP.

By the way, defeating a grasshopper would give him 1 DP. Locusts would give 5 DP, too. As this meadow was located in an area where not many humans went, grasshopper hunting was important work to earn funds.

“Ah—”

And, just then, he saw a hawk flying through the sky. Hawks were birds of prey, a rabbit’s natural predator.

They only saw rabbits as food. His dungeon didn’t have an underground floor back when he first started, so many of his fellow rabbits were taken by them, never to return.

“Oi lazy byums! Enemy spotted, let’s give it to him!”

“”” ROJYAAAH! “””

If they got caught by the enemy, that would be the end. They assembled into an anti-hawk combat formation.

Of the three horned rabbits, two were on the ground with one on top of them.

“Nyukay, I’m going to run away so do nyour best!”

“”” Eeeehhh!? “””

“What? If it myanaged to get me the dyungeon would end~”

“Truuuue, but...”

“Kyinda cruel?”

“Ah, hyold on, the hawk’s here. Intercept, intercept~!”

The hawk lowered its altitude to attack. Taking their chance, the three rabbits leapt at it.

Two of them turned into the footstools while the third leapt into an attack. By hopping off of the ground and once again from the backs of the other two, it hurled its body high into the air like a multi-stage rocket.

This was the secret technique they developed to take down hawks, the Pyon Pyon Attack!

“Ah—missed.”

“Whoops.”

“We’re dyead~”

But as a one-shot kind of move, it came with the huge gamble of them

missing so high up in the air.

Even though they missed, the hawk returned to the sky to start over after realizing they launched a counteroffensive.

“Don’t gyive up! We can still do it!”

“629-sama, run away~!”

“We can dyo it! I’ll be a footstool this time tyoo!”

They quickly assembled into formation once again. This time, Core No. 629 also participated as one of the footstools. The horned rabbits put their feet on Core No. 629’s head and prepared the formation.

The hawk once again descended and took aim.

“Now! Pyon Pyon Attack #2!”

“Ah, wyait—”

“Uwaah, whaaat!?”

Their tempo collapsed. The hawk descended as though it saw a chance to attack, but the rabbit that launched into air fell back down and barely managed to hit the hawk with a headbutt from above.

Falling to the ground, the hawk breathed its last after a train wreck of various people making various mistakes.

“While embyarrassing, we did it~”

“Good job. Nyow to groom myself~”

“We can hold our nyears as high as bro!”

The three horned rabbits frolicked about. Core No. 629 decided to shoo them off of his head and on to the ground.

Upon collecting the hawk’s corpse, his DP increased by 150. A good income.

“Hmph, nyot a hard enemy at all! Easy win, easy win.”

“629-sama, nyuu tried running away~”

“Yeah~, nyuu tried running~”

“... What’re nyuu lazybyones chattering about... okay, I’ll reward nyuu! Strawberries!”

“”” STRAWBERRIES!! “””

Strawberries were rare delicacies for rabbits. It would be bad for their stomachs if they ate too many, but nothing held more appeal to them as long as

they kept it to small amounts.

He's gotten an unexpectedly good amount of DP, so splurging a little would be alright. Dungeon Core No. 629 looked over his three horned rabbits in contentment, still unsure of what to do about them.

"We normally only get to eat grass spawner weeds~"

"Those taste good too, but strawberries really do taste the best~!"

"Fuheheh, strawberries, gimme strawberries, gimme gimme~!"

"... Alright nyow, let's head byack for strawberries, nkay~?"

"""" STRAWBERRIES~~~! """"

By the way, this dungeon, [Rabbit Paradise] increased in difficulty as one went lower underground.

It had magic rabbits, rabbits that acquired the ability to use magic, armor rabbits, rabbits that wore solid armor, as well as soldier rabbits, rabbits that walked on two legs and used both weapons and armor. New adventurers would occasionally chase a rabbit and stray into its borders, never to be seen again... its nonreturn rate is 99%, with a 100% nonreturn rate for its underground floors.

Its a field dungeon that not even the guild knows the location of thanks to that, but for the select few adventurers that love rabbits, this paradise's existence is gossiped about as gospel.